History of the Emmaus Mennonite Church

Whitewater, Kansas

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HISTORY

OF THE

EMMAUS MENNONITE CHURCH

Whitewater, Kansas

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Compiled by the Centennial Committee:

Ernest Claassen, Mrs. B. G. Harder
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and Walter Penner

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Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Psalm 100:4

PREFACE

When other Mennonite churches of our area were observing their Centennial year in 1974, we at the Emmaus Mennonite Church near Whitewater, Kansas, looked on with keen interest. Our Centennial year was 1976.

A committee was chosen to coordinate plans for a festive commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the coming of our people to America. This celebration was held on May 29 and 30, 1976. The committee, consisting of Ernest Claassen, Mrs. B. G. Harder, Frank Busenitz, Mrs. Henry Claassen and Walter Penner, was also asked to compile a book about our history.

In this book we have endeavored to trace our history not only for the past 100 years but back to the days of the Reformation. Our position that the Church should be composed of believers who had been baptized as adults and convictions about the separation of church and state caused us to be looked upon as unique and sometimes unpopular. Consequently, there were migrations from Holland to Germany, Russia and America.

These conditions have had an effect on our theology. These convictions have cost blood and many lesser sacrifices. Our life as a community was affected because we were driven together by the beliefs we held in common. Our attitude toward material things can also be traced to some of the influences of our history.

It would be impossible to acknowledge all those who contributed toward this book. I have very much appreciated the insights of our committee. Some of this history transpired in their lifetime. All of it was one generation closer to them than to most of us. Had our committee meetings been recorded, this would have made another book. As you read this book, it is our prayer that it will be profitable as well as interesting. With this concern we send it forth.

-- Walter Penner

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GLIMPSES OF OUR ANABAPTIST FOREFATHERS

> On a crisp October night in 1517, the thirty-first to be exact, a black-garbed Augustinian monk made his way undetected to the castle church. The place was an insignificant medieval German town named Wittenberg. With swift, determined strokes he nailed one of the most inflammable documents of the age to the church door, which served as the village bulletin board. Within a fortnight all Europe was echoing the sound of the inauspicious hammer. A month later the hardly-audible taps had become sledge hammer blows assailing the very citadel of the Roman Catholic Church. For the Austin friar of that October night was none other than Martin Luther. The apparently innocent manuscript was the first fusillade against Rome, the Ninety-five Theses.[1]

With this seemingly insignificant action of protest, Luther sparked the Reformation that would change church and political history in Europe and around the world. Luther's Theses had an unprecedented circulation. Within a few weeks they were being read all over Germany, and Germany was solidly behind the Reformer.

There were many underlying reasons that precipitated the Reformation. We can only mention a few: 1) Growing unrest and dissatisfaction in the Roman Catholic Church; 2) indulgences; 3) exploitations by Rome through burdensome exactions in order to maintain the splendor of the papal court; 4) immorality within the Church; 5) many areas of disagreement with the teachings of the Church of Rome; 6) mistreatment and martyrdom of reformers who were forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, such as John Huss (1370-1415) of Bohemia, Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) of Italy, and John Wycliffe (1330-1384) of England,

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[1]William R. Estep, The Anabaptist Story (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), p. 7.

whose remains were exhumed and burned in 1428.

Another very important impetus to the Reformation was the invention of the printing press. Once the Reformation was in progress, books, Bibles, tracts, and pamphlets came from the press in ever-increasing numbers. The incredible speed of the Reformation would have been impossible without the printing press. Its development is an illustration of the manner in which God sovereignly meshed a series of apparently unrelated events that together made up the Reformation.

As a result of the many Bibles and other Christian reading materials that were now available, Bible study groups were formed. (It can safely be said that the greatest single contribution to the far-reaching results of the Reformation was "an open Bible in the hands of the people." They could now listen to God speak to them directly in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.) Martin Luther found himself in the forefront of the developing controversy as the champion of Reformation truth, and gave his followers much light from God's Word. There were, however, some areas in which Luther did not see all the false teachings and practices of the Roman Church, as we will mention later.

Another person who contributed much to the Reformation was a young Catholic priest, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), born only seven weeks after Martin Luther. In Switzerland he is commonly called the Swiss Reformer. Zwingli was an outstanding student, had a forceful personality, and was a great leader in the Reformation. Consequently, he drew to him a number of gifted young men who were primarily interested in the study of Greek classics. One of these was a scholar named Conrad Grebel, who had joined the group by November, 1521. Love of learning the Greek language so attracted these young students that Zwingli took the opportunity and introduced them to the Greek New Testament. By 1522 they too had become zealous for reform, particularly Grebel, but within three years their convictions had driven them far beyond Zwingli's position.

As Luther and his followers grew in their understanding of the Scriptures, they corrected many Roman teachings. On the other hand there were some inconsistencies. They certainly understood the doctrine of justification through faith, forgiveness without penance,

no indulgences, and the priesthood of the believer. But Luther upheld infant baptism and the corporeal presence of Christ in the bread and wine in a sacramental union at the Lord's Supper, which was considered a sacrifice rather than a Memorial Supper. Neither did Luther believe in the separation of church and state.

Conrad Grebel and two other Reformation personalities, Felix Manz and George Blaurock, did not endorse infant baptism, and entirely rejected the view of sacramental baptism. Baptism was an outward sign of conversion and followed it, not "a means of regeneration." It was rather "a sign that it had been accomplished." Similarly the Lord's Supper was without sacramental value. It was a memorial of the death of Christ with efficacy only according to the faith of the recipient. Contrary to some of the early reformers, these young students did not believe that baptism and communion merit salvation. Luther and his followers also advocated the state church whereas Grebel, Manz and their followers believed in separation of Church and State and non-resistance. However, the greatest point of disagreement was infant baptism versus believers' baptism. One historian says that "anabaptism (rebaptism) was clearly the most revolutionary act of the Reformation."[1]

THE BIRTH OF ANABAPTISM

On January 21, 1525, about a dozen men were gathered in the home of Felix Manz, near Grossmünster. For an exact account of what transpired we quote from The Large Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren. The account bears the earmarks of an eyewitness who was probably none other than George Blaurock.

> And it came to pass that they were together until anxiety (angst) came upon them, yes, they were so pressed within their hearts. Thereupon they began to bow their knees to the Most High God in heaven and called upon Him as the Informer

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[1]John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine (Scottdale: Scottdale Press, 1947), pp. 24-25.

> of Hearts (Hertzenkündiger) and prayed that He would show them His divine will and that He would show His mercy unto them. For flesh and blood and human forwardness did not drive them, since they well knew what they would have to suffer on account of it.
>
> After the prayer, George Blaurock stood up and besought Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptize him with the true Christian baptism upon his faith and knowledge. And when he knelt down with such a request and desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained minister to perform such work.[1]

After his baptism at the hands of Grebel, Blaurock proceeded to baptize all the others present. The newly baptized then pledged themselves as true disciples of Christ to live lives separated from the world and to teach the gospel and keep the faith.

Anabaptism was born! This event was the beginning of the earliest church of the Swiss Brethren. No other event so clearly symbolized the break with Rome. The position these men had taken was also a very definite break with tradition and also separated them from the reformers that did not hold the anabaptist conviction of adult baptism. It was, however, not an unpremeditated decision. They had met with other reformers repeatedly to persuade and convince them of their convictions but Zwingli and his group could not agree.

The above account of rebaptism or believers' baptism did not only mark the beginning of the Anabaptist Movement but was also the beginning of the large evangelical movements in the history of the church, and the most terrible persecution of many centuries. There were fewer than eight years (7 years, 2½ months) from the beginning of the Reformation (1517) until the beginning of the Anabaptist Movement (1525). The growth of the Anabaptist Movement was so phenomenal that in 1527, only two years after its beginning, there were Anabaptists all over Europe. Since the Anabaptists were a persecuted and

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[1]William R. Estep, The Anabaptist Story (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963).

scattered people, no records were kept and are of course not available. But that the Anabaptist Movement grew to remarkable numbers can be concluded from statements written by historians of the day. Of Balthazer Hübmaier it is recorded that he "baptized three hundred men and women in one day."[1] Another historian writes, "Such, then, were the sufferings of the Anabaptists. Presently the number of martyrdoms reached the appalling total of tens of thousands."[2] The following is a statement by William Stevenson from his book The Story of the Reformation:

> This brutality continued during the entire reign of Charles V, and shortly after his abdication when his son Phillip II came to the throne, Phillip was able to write to his regent, "Wherefore introduce the Spanish Inquisition?...The inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless than that of Spain."[3]

We quote another paragraph from church history that depicts the extent and severity of the persecution:

> In 1529 a death decree was issued against the Anabaptists by the Second Diet of Speirs. This greatly accelerated the program of extermination already in progress. At times the customary efforts of oppression proved inadequate to stem the tide of the growing movement. Other methods were then tried....Four hundred special police were hired to hunt down Anabaptists and execute them on the spot. The group proved too small and was increased to one thousand. The severe persecution was not without effect. However, the effect was not always what those in

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[1]William Stevenson, The Story of the Reformation (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 56.

[2]Ibid., p. 57.

[3]John L. Motley, The Rise of the Dutch Republic, Vol. I (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883), p. 341.

> authority might have wished. Untold thousands must have died. The extant records preserved in the Geschichts-Buch, and Martyr's Mirror, and court records are fragmentary and at times inaccurate. Nevertheless, they indicate that thousands of Anabaptists fell victim to one of the most widely spread persecutions in Christian history. The Count of Altzey was dismayed at the increase of Anabaptists after mass executions failed to halt their spread. He is reported to have said, "What shall I do, the more I execute, the more they increase."[1]

Once again we see that "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness overcame it not." (John 1:5) "The Anabaptists they killed, but the truth they could not quench." Truth is immortal! The adage "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" is a worthy saying. The persecutions were not always as intense and severe as mentioned above; but they lasted from 1525 until 1811, almost three hundred years.

So thorough was the persecution that the Anabaptists were completely wiped out in some areas. In other sections where persecution was less thorough the testimony of the martyrs led to phenomenal growth. Many that were persecuted fled to other areas or countries. Theirs was a vain hope. Nowhere in Europe were they really welcome. The Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, and the secular powers all were united in destroying the Anabaptist Movement. Even the common people, with very few exceptions, were either prejudiced or directly opposed to the Anabaptists.

Large numbers of Anabaptists were concentrated in the Netherlands at the beginning of the Anabaptist Movement. Of these Anabaptists many fled to Northeast Germany to the Danzig area to escape the rigors of persecution. These migrants were the forefathers of the Mennonites that came to Kansas to the Whitewater area, and founded the Emmaus Mennonite Church in 1876.

Although this segment of the Anabaptist Movement was

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[1]William R. Estep, The Anabaptist Story (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), p. 46.

not martyred in the Danzig area, they soon found that here too they were not appreciated by the populace, and underprivileged and discriminated against by the government. They faced and endured these conditions for the next three hundred years. However, at the outset of this period God gave them a man who gave them scriptural teachings and patterns by which they could live victorious Christian lives even in adversity. This man was Menno Simons. According to history, Menno Simons visited our forefathers in the Danzig area repeatedly and ministered to them in various churches.

The question might be asked as to why our forefathers were permitted to come to the Danzig area, when they were unwanted and persecuted in all other parts of Europe. The Danzig area is situated just above the mouth of the Weichsel River (renamed the Vistula River). The tributary of the Weichsel River lies some four hundred miles in a southerly direction of the Danzig area and as a result, the upper river begins to thaw out earlier in the spring than the lower part of the river, thus causing the river to become clogged with ice jams, and resulting in much flooding in early spring. These conditions turned the area into swamps and wasteland.

Our forefathers, coming from Holland, were largely agricultural people and also knew the art of building drainage-canals, dikes, and dams to avoid unnecessary flooding. This combination was an unusual skill, perfectly suited to bring the area into production, a skill that the Polish people did not have. The government of West Prussia recognized the potential of these people from Holland, should they come and settle in this area. Through this remarkable situation our forefathers were permitted to come to the Danzig area, and live there for some four hundred years in spite of their religious convictions.

How did our forefathers fare in their new homeland? In a short account, such as this, we can only mention briefly some of the conditions that they encountered in this country. First, there was very little, if any martyrdom. The area which they occupied was soon brought to a high degree of production for which, historically, they received no recognition from the government. They were not privileged to become citizens and were required to pay extremely high taxes to retain their right to live in

this country. They were not allowed to live in the cities for the most part, and they were deprived of engaging in certain occupations. In later periods they were no longer allowed to buy land.

Again and again the Anabaptists were deprived or burdened by government regulations of some kind. Repeatedly our forefathers sent representatives to the government, asking for relief or leniency, but without avail. These conditions to which they were subjected kept them at a near poverty level. Several times they were threatened with deportation. They were rejected by all in spite of their accomplishments. The Protestants, Catholics, government, and populace all looked on them with disfavor.

These conditions continued in varying degrees until about 1800, when large numbers of Mennonites migrated to Russia. It is estimated by some historians that 100,000 Mennonites settled in Russia, some sooner, some later.

As one scans and ponders the history of the Anabaptists, it is amazing to observe their phenomenal growth, increasing from a mere handful of believers to multiplied thousands in less than a decade, and spreading to all parts of Europe in the same period of time. Their loyalty and faithfulness to God in persecutions is simply astounding. The tribulations of these unfortunate people are catalogued by Menno Simons as follows:

> Some they have executed by hanging, some they have tortured with inhuman tyranny, and afterwards choked with cords at the stake. Some they have roasted and burned alive. Some they have killed with the sword and given them to the fowls of the air to devour. Some they have cast to the fishes (that is, drowned)....Even sex was no protection against the avalanche of persecution....Many women were buried alive. Some wander about here and there, in want, homelessness...in holes and caves of the earth. They must flee with their wives and children from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered and lied about by all men.[1]

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[1]Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, p. 229.

How could the Anabaptists bring about such a magnificent change in such a short time? What inspired them to take the message of redemption to their fellow-men in such great numbers, always in danger of persecution? What fortified them to remain faithful and loyal to God, even singing praises to Him while they were being martyred? These are questions worth pondering.

In order to get a more complete picture of the Anabaptists, let us visualize their condition and plight before the Reformation. First, we must remember that they had no access to the Bible. Counsel and instruction came from the Church, administered through the priests. This left them entirely under the hierarchy of the Church. Indulgences were the order of the day. What were indulgences? In short, it was an abuse of the Church, in which if a man gave a given amount of money to the priest his sins were forgiven and/or he was delivered from purgatory. And there was always the question whether the sum given was really enough to completely cancel the sin, so repeated demands were often made. "It was a complete negation of a TRUTH on which his very life depended and all his hopes of heaven."[1]

These and other manipulations of the church left the people in fear and despair as to their eternal future, and gave them no peace and joy in this life. These conditions also left them in complete darkness as to how to live a victorious and God-fearing life, or even how to become a Christian.

Life now, to the Anabaptists, was a complete reversal from these conditions. Where they formerly lived in darkness and despair, they now enjoyed the freedom and light that came from God's Word. They now reveled in the peace and joy and assurance that they received from reading the Scriptures. Nothing could compare; no price was too high to pay for their new-found liberty. Freedom is probably the word that described the Anabaptists most fittingly. No matter how much they were rejected and persecuted, they were now free! Regardless of the consequences, whether imprisonment or death, the "good news" was made known to friend and foe. Living a holy and God-

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[1]William Stevenson, The Story of the Reformation (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 34.

fearing life was their highest priority. Spreading the "good news" took precedence to all other activities. With this zeal and enthusiasm, new churches were often formed within a few weeks. There is, however, another aspect of the Anabaptists that we must not overlook. The Anabaptists, in the study of the Scriptures, had come to the conclusion and conviction of discipleship (nachfolge). To be a disciple, one must follow Christ and faithfully obey His commands.

These conditions provided an irrefutable argument plus the power of a holy life in contrast to people who were living in defeat and misery. No wonder people were won to Christ in great numbers. Winning the lost to Christ filled the Christians with added zeal and passion to win others.

What a lesson for us! We have the same opportunities, the same promises, the same power, the same message, the same Scriptures, plus many advantages that the early Anabaptists did not have, such as communication, transportation, and others. Are we willing to pay the price that our forefathers paid?

-- Frank Busenitz

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

First Printed Bible (Latin) 1456

Christopher Columbus Discovers America. 1492

Martin Luther Born. . . . . .1483 (Died 1546)

Menno Simons Born . . . . . .1492 (Died 1559)

Beginning of the Reformation. 1517

Beginning of the Anabaptist Movement. 1525

First Anabaptists in Danzig, Germany. 1530

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"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman."

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria."

Christ's coming, long foretold, was at a time when the civilized world was first united under one government, that of the emperor Augustus at Rome. Order and law had been established, and for the first time in centuries the world was at peace. A system of highways had been built throughout the empire and travel over most of Europe, northern Africa and Asia Minor was possible as never before. Christian missionaries, especially those with Roman citizenship, like Paul, could move freely in preaching the gospel. The leaven of Christianity could spread as would not have been possible at any earlier time. But the leaven worked only slowly, through persecution and martyrdom, until after 300 years the emperor Constantine became a convert, and Christianity was no longer subject to persecution. Toward paganism Constantine's attitude is said to have been one of "contemptuous tolerance." But there were those who were not disposed to be so lenient.

Through three centuries Christian conviction had been strong enough to endure persecution and martyrdom. Now church leaders were respected and accepted by the state, and the strong convictions that had carried them through persecution now tended to make them intolerant of those who did not fully share those convictions. With a commendable zeal for true doctrine, the leadership of the church began to claim authority to define what was true and acceptable. In alliance with kings and rulers they began to persecute and punish those who believed differently.

To support this claim to authority, the doctrine developed that the pope, as bishop of Rome, was to be

regarded as the apostle Peter's successor. Peter was held to be infallible because in Matthew 16:18 Jesus tells him, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." But in Matthew 18:18 the same authority is given to all the disciples.

This doctrine of Peter's infallibility was not held by the apostolic church. In Galatians 2:12 Paul points out the inconsistencies in Peter's conduct. In Acts 15 is the record of a council held to decide on a point of disagreement. Although Peter was present and took part in the discussion, there is not the slightest hint of any thought of individual authority. The "apostles and the elders, with the whole church" rendered a judgment on the basis of what "has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

In spite of this apostolic example, the leaders of the church claimed sole right to define true doctrine. At first they met disagreement with reasoning and disputation. Where that failed they felt justified in slaying those who seemed to be spreading false doctrine. What had been the persecuted church now became the persecuting church. Thielem van Braght, in "Martyrs' Mirror," recounts how through each century there were those whose study of the Scriptures led to convictions not approved by the hierarchy of the established church, and who suffered martyrdom as a result. For centuries this continued.

From the 9th Century on, there are records of definite movements or organizations of those not agreeing with all the tenets of the church, such as the Albigenses and Waldensians. Though violently persecuted, their teachings seem never to have been completely stamped out.

In the 14th and 15th Centuries there came a time of significant change over the civilized world. This has been called a springtime in history, a Renaissance, a renewal. It was a time of awakening, of discovery, of increasing freedom of thought and initiative. The inventions of the telescope and the mariner's compass came in this period, as did the discovery of America. The invention of the printing press made communication of thought more free and wide-spread than ever before. As copies of the Scriptures became more plentiful, more and more individuals came to have convictions of their own. It was a movement of the many, and as it gained

support, leaders here and there became bold enough to speak out in defense of freedom of conscience. Among those better known are John Wycliffe of England, Martin Luther of Germany and Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland. This spreading of the spirit of the Renaissance into the area of religion has been called the Reformation.

As mentioned earlier, the beliefs of the Albigenses and Waldensians seem never to have died out entirely; and about this time, in Switzerland and the Netherlands, there appeared those holding similar convictions. These teachings differed somewhat from those of Luther, and even went beyond them. While agreeing with Luther on justification by faith alone, they did not regard good works as being without value or significance. Rather, they were most positive in stating that faith cannot be separated from works, but must bring fruit in a truly Christian life. Luther unconditionally denied the free will of man, and regarded human nature as completely depraved. This new direction stated that man is free to choose between good and evil, and that human nature (as formed in God's image) still has a capability for good.

Their insistence on only adult baptism was the most distinctive teaching of this new movement. In the Netherlands its adherents came to be known as "Doopsgesinde" or Baptism-minded." In Switzerland they were called "Wiedertaüfer" - "Rebaptisers" or "Anabaptists."

Popes and bishops responded to the independent thinking of the Reformation with unparalleled fury. Thielem van Braght, after reporting on martyrdom through many centuries, says that none of the previous persecutions are to be compared with that of the 16th Century. In length, in severity and in the number of victims, it exceeded all that had gone before.

Especially hard pressed were the Anabaptists. Not only was all of Catholicism arrayed against them, but they also found themselves in sharp disagreement with other Protestants. As the Encyclopedia Brittanica states, "The idea of adult baptism roused a bitterness which is hard to understand nowadays." Of course if, as the Anabaptists maintained, infant baptism was meaningless, then not even the princes of the church were properly baptised, and the baptisms they had performed were in vain.

In Switzerland Zwingli, like Luther, did not go far enough for the Anabaptists in making a complete break

with the domination of church and state. A group of them, meeting in homes for Bible study, increasingly felt the need of a new church, not of universal membership through infant baptism, but of mature persons baptised upon confession of individual faith and repentance, living a new life. Among this group were Simon Stumpf, Wm. Reublin, Conrad Grebel, Georg Blaurock and Felix Manz. At one of their meetings Blaurock asked Grebel to baptise him, then in turn baptised a number of the others. In doing this and in preaching adult baptism they had broken with the state-church party then in power, and were soon imprisoned. Manz and Blaurock were martyred. Grebel, still a young man, no doubt escaped the same fate by dying of the pest. As these and their followers made their beliefs known, severe measures were taken against them. The persecutions here seem to have persisted longer than elsewhere in Europe. Even after they no longer faced the death penalty, they were banished. If any ventured to return they were whipped, branded and again expelled. Not until 1815 were the Mennonites of Canton Bern granted complete religious tolerance and full rights of citizenship.

In the Netherlands persecution was also most severe. Nowhere else, according to the Encyclopedia Brittanica, were there such numbers of martyrs. This is underscored by C. Henry Smith, who states that "more Mennonites were put to death for the sake of their religious convictions in the Netherlands alone than were sent to a martyr's grave from all the religious parties in England during the same period."

The province of Flanders in the Netherlands appears to have been the ancestral home of most of those who built up the Emmaus congregation here. Cornelius J. Dyck says of Flanders, "The records show Anabaptists to have been very active, but the intense persecution prevented any one person from assuming prolonged leadership among them. The Flanders story, therefore, is primarily one of many faithful persons building, spreading and upholding the church."

Although such movements involve many persons, usually only a few are remembered. Melchior Hoffman seems to have been a successful preacher in the Netherlands and northwest Germany, baptising 300 converts on one occasion. Another of the early leaders was Obbe Philips, a surgeon,

aided later by his younger brother Dirk. One of the early converts was Sicke Freriks, a tailor, whose execution at Leeuwarden made a strong impression on a young Catholic priest, Menno Simons, at nearby Pingjum. Until this time Menno had led a rather superficial life, as he himself said, "in playing, drinking and all manner of frivolous diversions." The writings of Luther had raised some doubts in his mind, and he began to study the New Testament, which up to this time, he said, had been a sealed book to him. He came to the conviction that not all the teachings of his church were biblical. The execution of Sicke Freriks because of "renewing his baptism" disturbed him. Until now he had never questioned infant baptism. He again turned to the New Testament, and could find no justification for the doctrine. Increasingly he found himself in agreement with the Anabaptists. His own brother joined an extreme group at Muenster that took up arms in a misguided attempt to speed the coming of the millennium by force, and perished with others when this movement was crushed by the authorities.

Menno, who had vigorously warned against this group, now felt he could no longer stand apart from the struggle of conscience against repression. In January, 1536, he withdrew from the priesthood and the Catholic church, and was baptised by Obbe Philips. Soon afterward he married, and his faithful wife shared the dangers and suffering that were his for the rest of his life. Somewhat later a small group of the persecuted Anabaptists asked him to "take to heart the great wretchedness and need of poor, distressed souls" and to become their minister. He hesitated, he said, because of his "limited talents, great ignorance, weak nature and timidity of the flesh," and certainly he had every reason to be fearful of the consequences of taking such a step. But he felt he could not ignore the need of "these pious God-fearing souls - sheep having no shepherd." He accepted the charge, and now for him began "18 years of extreme anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery and persecution...compelled to live everywhere in fear and seclusion...on guard when the dogs bark lest the captors be on hand." A decree of the emperor offered a reward of a hundred gulden for his arrest, and forbade anyone to receive him, shelter him, or even speak to him or read his books. Despite all these difficulties he gave himself to writing and preaching,

often forced to move to find a refuge. It was in this strenuous time that many of our forefathers were moving to the Vistula area. Menno was in touch with them, and in 1549 wrote a letter to "the congregations in Prussia."

Although Menno did not originate the movement, and others like Dirk Philips were equally active, the Anabaptists began to be known as "Mennists" or "Mennonites," a name which has now clung to them for four centuries.

In his old age Menno's congregation at Wismar was exiled. They were invited to settle on the estate of a nobleman in Holstein, who protected them from further molestation. Menno was able to set up his own printing press, which helped to distribute his many writings. He died January 13, 1561.

As one traces the history of conscience through the centuries, it becomes apparent that the most severe persecutions have come, not from without, but from within what should be the household of faith: the recognized and established religious authorities. It was so from the time of the Hebrew prophets. Jesus knew that "it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem," the religious center of the nation. It was the chief leaders of God's chosen people, the custodians of the Messianic prophecy, who rejected and condemned the Messiah. Again it was the recognized and established church that since Constantine, and especially in the Reformation, conducted the most severe and widespread persecution of all.

At the Mennonite World Conference in Germany in 1957 the significant statement was made: "Intolerance is the specific Christian sin." An earnest, conscientious person works his way to a firm conviction as to what is true and right. Then he feels that everyone must follow in the same way and has no right to do otherwise. "Error has no rights as against truth." A wrong teaching must be suppressed, by whatever methods are necessary. In our zeal for the true teaching of Christ, we forget that we can only be recognized as being true to Him when we love one another. So let us learn from history the lesson of respectful toleration. Though I may not be able to agree with my neighbor's conviction, still he has every right to hold it and live by it. "If this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them."

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In the preceding we have dealt mostly with the conflict of the Anabaptists with religious authorities. The next article takes up their difficulties with civil authorities in more recent times.

-- Ernest G. Claassen

Home ¼ mile north of church, built by Gerhard Regier, Sr. in 1876. Note ramp at right for stepping into carriages. A grandson, Willie Regier, now lives here.

LIFE IN THE OLD COUNTRY
AND
REASONS FOR EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

In the history of our church, written by our first elder, Leonhard Sudermann, we find the following words:

> "Within the church of Christ there was always a group that took a unique stand toward peace and non-resistance. This group has always remained small, because this principle did not find general approval; for it led its followers into a life of self-denial. This group felt constrained to practice the great principle of love, also in their church life, to avoid all thought of revenge, and for this reason also to abstain from all direct and indirect warfare.
>
> "Because of this principle of love and non-resistance, the Mennonite church has always endured fierce persecution, torture and death. History records how in times of persecution they took refuge in the hills and valleys, caves and canyons of Austria, Italy, Switzerland and southern France.
>
> "But in spite of terrible persecutions and mistreatment, they remained true to their faith, knowing that in the end the victory would be theirs and their Christ's."

As a result of similar persecutions in Holland during the middle of the 16th Century, Mennonites came in large numbers by permission of the Polish king, and upon invitation of owners of waste and swamp lands along the lowlands of the Vistula and Nogat Rivers, to serve in the vicinity of Danzig and Elbing in what was then known as Poland.

The Dutch Mennonites were experts in the art of reclaiming swamp lands by means of dikes and canals, and so because of their economic worth they were given a hearty welcome.

The Mennonites saw in their daily work the practice of a religious duty and felt themselves responsible to God for their property. Through their agricultural ability and industry, large swampy estates in the Vistula delta were converted into the most productive fields of all Poland. These estates were leased to the Mennonites for 30 to 40-year periods until finally they came into complete possession of them.

It was here that in 1560 the first congregation of non-resistant Christians was formed in western Germany, where it was frequently visited and served by Menno Simons himself.

At first, living in isolated groups, they were able to live a quiet and unmolested life. But in time, as they grew in numbers and became wealthy, native citizens became jealous of the prosperity of these thrifty and sober farmers who also practiced an unpopular religion.

They were no longer burned at the stake, to be sure; but they were frequently hampered in the free exercise of their faith and for a long time were not granted the rights of citizenship.

Not all Mennonites were farmers. Many of the refugees settled within the cities of Danzig and Elbing. When in 1656 the suburbs of Danzig were burned down for defense purposes, many Mennonites lost their property. Many times they were also hampered in their business and did not enjoy the economic freedom that those in the rural areas did.

During this period, a ruling was made that the Mennonites "shall keep themselves quiet in their religion and shall not try to induce and draw anyone into their fold." Therefore, the growth of the churches depended entirely on increase by birth.

Economically, the Mennonites were hampered in many ways. Over long periods of time they were not permitted to buy land from a Lutheran or Catholic without special permission from the ruler. For over 150 years they were forced by the dominating church to pay heavy taxes and to support the Catholic and Lutheran parishes of their day.

For a long time they were not permitted to build a house of worship, but gathered in homes. Upon repeated requests to the authorities, the ruler finally agreed if they could build a church within a week, they would be

permitted to do so. The ruler thought this impossible, but these Dutch farmers found a way. They hauled all the building materials to a neighboring homestead. Here they sawed and fitted the lumber; and when the appointed time came, they hauled it to the building site and in a week the church building was finished, ready for worship. Thus, the first Mennonite church building was erected in Prussia.

Later they also had to pay very high prices for a permit to build a church; and when the congregations of Heubuden, Ladekopp and Tiegenhagen got their permit to build churches in 1768, they also had to build one for the Catholic church and maintain it.

Forbidden to buy land from a non-Mennonite, hampered by excessive taxes, and unable to provide homes and existence for the growing number of young people, the Mennonites looked about them for a new home where they might be free to exercise their religious convictions without fear of governmental restraint.

Just at this time Russia gave them an invitation to settle in the Ukraine. From 1769 to 1804 over 500 families migrated to Russia. At this time the king stated in a document that emigration of Mennonites should be stopped since there was too great a loss in population, culture and wealth.

The Mennonites of Prussia were of Dutch cultural background and the Dutch language was used exclusively in their worship services.

When in 1762 the first German sermon was preached in Danzig, it gave rise to much criticism. Five years later it was tried again with better results. It was not, however, until 1780, 220 years after the founding of the Mennonite church in Germany, that the German songbook was introduced in their services.

The freedom to live according to the dictates of their conscience was constantly being threatened by their rulers. In 1744 the Mennonites were granted full rights of citizenship. The recruiting agents, however, were instructed "that they respect the convictions of the Mennonite subjects in the Elbing district in the matter of taking part in war." When in 1746 General Gessler tried to draw Mennonites into the army, the church sent a petition to the king saying, "Such severe order never occurred to our fathers and we cannot obey, as we have

sacrificed our lives to live and die for Jesus, and having renounced revenge we want to remain in His Majesty's protection as disarmed and non-resistant Christians."

Twenty-seven years later they were ordered to pay the sum of $5000 for their exemption. This was not a substitute for military service but a legal payment in lieu of the same. This order was accepted by the Prussian Mennonites in the Heubuden Church and was paid annually for over 100 years, but for the last 50 years it was more than doubled.

In gratitude for the exemptions granted, and to show their loyalty to their country, they frequently made special contributions in times of special need. At one time they donated $6,000 and 6,000 yards of linen. During wars they sent food into the hospitals and collected large sums of money for the wounded, thus being true to their principle that they wanted to heal wounds rather than inflict them.

In 1806 while the Prussian King and Queen were going through Prussia on their way to the frontier, the Mennonite churches of that region collected $30,000 as a gift for the war widows and orphans, and had delegated a farmer and his wife, by the name of Nickel, to present the gift to the King and Queen. In addition, the wife gave the queen a basket of fresh butter, remarking that she had heard the queen was in need of such a luxury. Both gifts were greatly appreciated by the royal pair.

Finally in 1780, they were granted the so-called "Gnaden Privilegium" in which the King guaranteed for himself and his successors on the Prussian throne:

1. Everlasting freedom from conscription and the consequent military service.

2. Undisturbed freedom of religion.

3. Protection in practicing their customary trades and professions in the limits of the laws and regulations introduced hitherto in Prussia.

During the War of 1813 universal military service was inaugurated. At first Mennonites were not exempted. The elders, appealing to the king for their former status,

declared that they would rather pay the extraordinary taxes and, what was even worse, "bear the mockery and ill-will of their neighbors," than to take up arms contrary to their religious convictions. As a result of this appeal they were exempted upon the payment of special taxes.

The greatest problem confronting the Mennonites of northern Germany during the 19th Century was the problem of maintaining their doctrine and practice of non-participation in war. This growing spirit of militarism made it increasingly difficult for those of the non-resistant faith to live up to this conviction.

While many efforts were made to keep the state privilege of exemption, many efforts were also made by sincere people to keep the principle of non-resistance alive among the Mennonites.

Although many of the Mennonites became prosperous, they tried to maintain simplicity and non-conformity as much as possible. More and more, however, broke away from the original restrictions of apparel and household. More and more also broke away from the position of non-resistance.

During the 19th Century the military spirit throughout Prussia and all Germany ran high. In 1848 a Prussian constitution declared that everyone was subject to military service. A number of Mennonites, fearing for their faith, left for other lands. Hundreds of families emigrated to Russia.

In 1867 a national conscription law was passed abolishing all exemptions, thus ending the privileges which Mennonites had enjoyed for over 300 years.

A year later this law was modified by the king of Prussia by a cabinet order making it possible to substitute noncombatant service in hospitals and quartermaster departments for full military service.

This led to a division among the brethren. A considerable number tiring in their struggle for military exemption were ready to follow the example of their brethren in Holland who had discarded the principle of non-resistance.

Some of the elders, among them the brethren Gerhard Penner and Wilhelm Ewert, strongly opposed the position many of the churches took in favor of noncombatant service. They put forth much effort to revive the biblical

principle of non-resistance among the Mennonites. Their efforts, however, came too late. Since Mennonites were not allowed to maintain their own schools, the younger generation which had been educated in the Lutheran elementary and high schools, where the militaristic spirit flourished, had not been prepared for such a test.

The government saw that the loyalty of Mennonite principles could not be harmonized with these noncombatant duties. So, in order to avoid all religious pressure, they were given two years time to emigrate. According to this, all Mennonites who did not want to emigrate would be subject to conscription.

The whole Mennonite community of 13,000 souls faced the inescapable decision either to go into noncombatant service or to leave their homes and country as many others had done before them. This decision was accompanied with many sacrifices. They had well-equipped farms and many servants to do their work. Every home had a cook, a housemaid, nursemaid and one to do the gardening and milking, also a young boy to heat their large stoves and brick ovens with straw, called "Peserjunge."

The men had several servants the year round, and in time of harvest, upwards to 50, to cut, bind and thresh the grain. In Europe the landowners were managers of their estates, while cheap labor did the actual work.

They were advised by Christian Krehbiel, who already lived in America, that every ordinary farmer and every business man in ordinary circumstances must be his own best workman and that their system of hired labor would not work in America. In Prussia the wages were from $50 to $60 a year, while in America they were from $150 to $200, and harvest wages $1.50 to $2.00 per day. One could not depend on men to stay for any length of time, for everyone could start to farm on his own with very little money.

In Heubuden, the congregation from which most of our forefathers came, the Elder, all ministers and the smaller part of the congregation, disagreed with the cabinet order completely. The seriousness of the crisis is shown by the fact that they had no communion services in the Heubuden church from 1874 to 1876.

How disturbed and critical the situation was, is shown by the letter Elder Johann Andreas of Elbing-Ellerwald circulated within his congregation, stating:

"Hereby I announce publicly that I, on the grounds of our confession of faith, cannot commemorate the Lord's supper with those who accept military conscription, but only with those who want to remain loyal to their confession of faith.

"This announcement is made that those who want to change their faith in accordance with the cabinet decree, commemorate the Lord's supper separately.

"Oh, how I wish that all the members of our congregation come and no one would stay away that we would be strengthened in our faith, to become perfect in love, and to receive in the future, with all faithful ones, the crown of life."

Signed, Johann Andreas.

When the greater part of the church members of Heubuden submitted to the demands of the government, those who could not accept these demands, withdrew from the church and founded what was known as the "Emigrating Church" or the "Auswanderungs Gemeinde."

In 1876, 55 families and 29 single persons emigrated to the United States, founding the three new congregations at Whitewater and Newton, Kansas, and Beatrice, Nebraska. Some joined the Bruderthal group near Hillsboro, Kansas.

In 1877, Elder Gerhard Penner emigrated to Beatrice, becoming the elder of the congregation there.

When we consider God's providence with our forefathers, who is there among us, who would not want to thank our heavenly Father for leading them to America, the only country in which it is still possible to enjoy a full freedom of worship.

-- B. G. Harder

THE SITUATION IN RUSSIA

As related in the preceding article, exemption from military service for the Prussian Mennonites ended in 1867. This was later modified to permit noncombatant service. In 1869, five Mennonite elders went to Berlin to make a last appeal for continued total exemption. Although they carried their appeal to the crown prince and the king, they received no encouragement. They were not permitted to see Count Bismarck, then exercising the real power in the Prussian government.

Germany then was composed of some 20 small kingdoms and dukedoms, Prussia among them. These often waged war against one another in temporary combinations and alliances. Two nations might be friends, then foes, whichever seemed to serve the national interest at the moment.

As an instance, in 1864 Prussia and Austria united in a war against Denmark, not in self defense, but to take over the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein. Two years later they disagreed on the administration of these lands, and war was the result. Again it was not a question of self defense, but of prestige and power, coolly and deliberately considered. As a historian frankly states: "The king of Prussia decided that possession of the dukedoms was worth a war."

Although such events are always obscured by propaganda, our fathers could not but sense that government actions were far from New Testament teachings. But rather than emigrate, a majority reluctantly accepted the alternative service offered them, while a minority chose to leave rather than compromise their convictions.

In Russia the Mennonites faced a similar situation. In 1870 an imperial decree gave notice of the end of the "eternal privilege" of exemption they had been promised. By 1880 all Mennonites remaining in Russia would become subject to conscription laws.

As in Prussia, several ministers were sent to the capital city to protest, among them Leonhard Sudermann, who had grown up in the Heubuden congregation in Prussia. This delegation was told that they could not expect total exemption, but would have to accept some form of alter-

native service. For Sudermann, military service was out of the question; and he did not feel that service in army hospitals was acceptable, as that was part of the total war machine. He was also concerned about the evil influences to be found in military barracks.

Since the situation in Russia seemed hopeless, the Mennonites in Russia began looking into the possibility of migrating elsewhere. In 1873, Sudermann and several others were delegated to go to America to view land available for settlement and to inquire into religious tolerance there. They were greatly encouraged to find so many of their faith in America prosperous and enjoying more freedom than they could expect in Russia. They returned with a favorable report which resulted in a large emigration to America in the next year, 1874.

Sudermann's congregation was located in the Molotschna area in South Russia with a mild climate and good farming conditions. They seem to have been reluctant to give up these advantages for an uncertain future in America. For three years after his return from America, he used all of his influence to induce them to emigrate. Finally, in 1876, he came to a crucial decision. Despite his great love for his people and his sense of responsibility for them, he felt that to his admonitions he should add the force of his own example, and lead the way to America. In an impassioned final sermon in Russia he summed up his conviction, his conflicting emotions, and his resolve to leave. A translation of that sermon follows.

-- Ernest G. Claassen

FAREWELL SERMON TO THE MENNONITE CONGREGATION

AT BERDIANSK, SOUTH RUSSIA, JULY 20, 1876

BY LEONHARD SUDERMANN

Isaiah 28:23-29, "Give ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my speech. Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continually open and harrow his ground? When he has leveled its surface does he not scatter dill, sow cummin, and put wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and spelt as the border? For he is instructed aright; his God teaches him. Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin; but dill is beaten out with a stick, and cummin with a rod. Grain is crushed, but not to the uttermost, not with a final crushing; his cartwheels rumble over it and break it up, but they do not grind it fine. This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and brings all to a glorious conclusion."

My dear congregation: The Lord's counsel is wonderful, and He brings all to a glorious conclusion. How often these words are confirmed in the life of the individual Christian, how the Lord glorifies Himself to him in joy and sorrow, in good and evil days; and often times of affliction are best suited to reveal the glory of the Lord. And God's hidden and mysterious ways demonstrate most clearly His greatness, goodness and mercy, and cause His children, even if the way leads through cross and suffering, to be full of expectation that He will bring it to a glorious conclusion. And as this precious word of God is confirmed with the individual, so also with families and congregations, with peoples and nations. We, too, have reached a point in time when our attention is directed to this word.

I must bid farewell, a fond farewell, to a land which for almost 35 years has been a dear home, farewell to a place which for almost as long has furnished me a dwelling place in which God has provided for me, has granted me shelter and innumerable benefits. O how many of the most varied memories are attached to a house, which for

30 years was a dwelling place for a family! Of what a variety of experiences the walls might witness if they could speak! I must bid farewell to many dear friends, to near and distant relatives, and to dear, dear sisters. O parting is always a weighty and often a critical matter, and after many serious experiences no one should ever take it lightly. How many a one has carelessly shaken a friend's hand in farewell, not dreaming that it was for the last time. Parting is hard and is a grave consequence of the fall into sin. But most difficult and weighty for me: I must bid farewell to my dear, dear congregation, with which I have so many tender and intimate relationships, and in which I have for nearly 16 years had the privilege of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in which I have often been blest with the comfort of the forgiving and saving grace of God. I must bid farewell to my dear, dear church, in which for nearly 11 years the Lord gave me the important office of an elder, which I carried on even if in great weakness; in which I could break the blessed bread and distribute the cup of the Lord, and in which I could receive 83 members into the church through holy baptism. How much mighty help from God, in spite of my great weakness and frailty, is attached to this past time of my official activity! How much solemn correction was experienced by my heart and by many another! How often I was witness of that momentous event which severed the ties that hold body and soul together, and reminded my conscience and that of many others, "Set your house in order for you shall die." How often at the funerals of loved ones gone before it was my grave responsibility to bring to mind the solemn hour when we will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and then receive according to what we have done in the body, whether good or evil. O my dear, dear congregation, all these common experiences have gradually woven firm ties about us, and it is in this hour of parting that I fully realize how firm they are, so that I will openly confess that it rends my heart now that times and circumstances are such that I must leave you.

I must presume there are those among us who will not understand me when I use the phrase, "I must"; who will consider it entirely inapplicable in the present instance if I say, "I MUST take leave of you." They would contradict me and say, "It is not that you must leave; you

want to leave." My beloved, of two momentous and difficult courses, I choose, according to my insight and perception, that which is weightiest and most difficult. I know that the duties that bind an elder to his congregation are of an exceptional nature, and that only an extraordinary motivation can permit him to dissolve such a relationship, when he considers that he must account to God for what he does. The thought of this solemn responsibility disturbs my heart and conscience, and drives me to haste, so that I must leave.

Throughout the Christian era the Lord has graciously acknowledged our body of believers, but not because they were so good and pious that for this reason He could favor them. On the contrary, like Israel, they have often conducted themselves as a stubborn people. But through them God sought to exemplify truths extremely important in His kingdom, but which have been disregarded entirely by other Christian groups. Those of our confession have at all times borne witness that war and Christianity are contradictions. And though in comparison with other Christian groups they have always been small and insignificant, God has yet used them to witness to the law of love before worldly majesties, principalities and powers, where war and bloodshed devastated lands and nations. The present time has given our church the same duty, and if we are now challenged with regard to this important article of our faith, it is the purpose of our great Chief Shepherd to impress this truth anew upon our people to purify them, to separate the dross from the gold, the chaff from the wheat; and also to confront all of Christianity in its secularized attitude, to bring it to the reflection that the works of the flesh can only bring the fruit of death; is incapable of producing the fruits of the spirit.

If we are to fulfill our present duty, to hold to the confession of hope and not waver, because God who has called us is faithful; if we are to follow in the footsteps of our fathers; then we, like they, must consider what is present and worldly to be worthless and unimportant, gladly sacrificing it, because with Abraham we await a city whose builder and maker is God. Like Moses, they chose rather to suffer with the children of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

It behooves us to be faithful in our Christian duty,

unlike the world, denying ungodliness and refusing all direct and indirect military service. And to preserve our freedom to be obedient to the truth, we should not submit to a law, under which we might be compelled to do what does not correspond to the demands of the gospel, and which we could not escape, once the permitted time for emigration has ended. This extremely important time, which our gracious sovereign has granted us for emigration, is more than half gone, and I am seriously disturbed to see so many of my companions in the faith still so calm. I feel called to demonstrate with my own example what now is our urgent duty; all the more when I observe that in just those churches where the leadership perceives no future danger, the members remain unperturbed and feel no necessity for leaving. My motive for taking leave is to underscore with my own example what I wish that all my companions in the faith would do. At present, I can serve the dear congregation in no other way better than to take leave of you, and by venturing forth to inspire you to follow me.

Therefore I repeat, "I must take leave of you." So for the future only the memory of pleasant days and years in this place remains to us. How often we had the opportunity to gather here and to meditate on the gospel, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith. In retrospect, I would like to refer to the words of the apostle Paul, which I chose for my text last Sunday.

I Cor. 2:1-9, "As for me, brothers, when I came to you, I declared the attested truth of God without display of fine words or wisdom. I resolved that while I was with you I would think of nothing but Jesus Christ - Christ nailed to the cross. I came before you weak and shaking with fear. The word I spoke, the gospel I proclaimed, did not sway you with subtle arguments; it carried conviction by spiritual power, so that your faith might be built, not upon human wisdom, but upon the power of God.

"And yet I do speak words of wisdom to those who are ripe for it, not a wisdom belonging to this passing age, nor to any of its governing powers, which are declining to their end; I speak God's hidden wisdom, his secret purpose framed from the very beginning to bring us to our full glory. The powers that rule the world have never

known it; if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, in the words of Scripture, 'Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, all prepared by God for those who love Him.'"

I was with you in great weakness. That I can say with my whole heart, for innumerable times I have felt and experienced my inadequacy. Yet I can say to the praise of the Lord, that He whose power is made perfect in weakness, and who gives strength to him who has no might, He has often let me experience something of the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In view of this, I hope I have not worked in vain among you, beloved. In as far as the Lord gave me grace and understanding, I have proclaimed the counsel of God for our salvation. I have pictured sin as an abomination to God and as the sole cause of our temporal and eternal wretchedness, and have often earnestly admonished you to a decisive break with it. On the other hand, I have extolled God's grace to you which is much mightier than sin and is able to save all sinners without exception. I have spoken of the redeeming love of our exalted Savior, Jesus Christ, who in love to us took on the form of a servant, went into suffering and death, and has done all to save all of humanity, and to bring them to their goal in time and eternity, who seeks in every sinner the lost sheep and the lost coin, and calls on the angels in heaven to rejoice when he finds it. I have told this to you to remove the mistrust, which is so deeply rooted in our hearts through Satan's deceit and power, that we might see that God does not accept us because He finds anything in us that is of value in His sight, but that we have a share in the blood of His Son simply because we are sinners and in need of divine grace. In view of my responsibility before the judgment seat of Christ, I have admonished every sinner without exception to come to Jesus, and have assured them that if they come they will receive mercy and find grace because with Him, our dear Savior, there is much grace and much forgiveness. I have not neglected to warn against scorning this freely offered salvation, and have called attention to the terrible judgment which is justly the portion of him who through rejection of this salvation tramples underfoot the Son of God and profanes the blood of the covenant by which we are sanctified, and who

rejects the Spirit of grace, for it is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God. I have proclaimed it to you, this momentous word, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, and today I once more impress it on heart and conscience -- born again or eternally lost! I have sought to combat all self-righteousness, and have reminded you that even our best works do not count before God, but that we believe we are saved only through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have said:

"Ask the hosts of all the holy
  Here, and in the heavenly sphere,
Was it not this blood that rescued
  Them from torment, pain and fear?
Did not this wash all their garments
  Free from stain and shining bright?
Was not this the heavenly ladder
  That led them to realms of light?"

All trust in one's own merit or self-worth diminishes God's honor, and transgresses against God's counsel and plan for our salvation and help; therefore, let us heartily reject it and honor God by faith, renounce self and let ourselves be saved on the one living way on which we pass through the narrow gate, where we leave all behind, and enter as poor, naked sinners, for only as such can we glorify God and experience the exceeding greatness of the saving and redeeming power of God.

Mindful of the solemn responsibility which I bear as the ambassador of Christ, I have considered it my duty to work with the youth, according to the limited ability and talents which the Lord has entrusted to me. With God, but in fear and trembling, I began this work when I was called to be an elder, and have continued it to this hour in great weakness, but I may say, also in blessing. I hope that through this, good seed has been sown in the hearts of the youth, and that they have early been advanced in the understanding of the divine word. Unpracticed in instruction when I began, the work was immensely lightened by the support of all the church members, and today when I regard my task here as concluded, I thank the parents who encouraged their children to attend; I thank you, dear children, that you attended regularly and that you made this instruction a pleasure, and which

brought me more understanding of the plan of salvation, and more knowledge of the Word of God. I believe that the few parents who did not encourage their children have withheld a blessing from them, which would have been valuable for their future life. Through this instruction it was my purpose to bring the riper youth to more self-knowledge and understanding of salvation, and so far as lay in my power, to meet a general need in our churches, where joining the church through holy baptism is often regarded as an empty ceremony. The seriousness of the matter can never be given too much weight, since according to the Word of God only those are true disciples, who through faith in Christ have become children of God, and only he who believes and is baptized can and will be saved.

And now, beloved, all for which God has used me as an instrument among you, and what happened through me in the demonstration of the spirit and the power of God, no credit is due me; to God alone be the glory! I repeat that today in my farewell to you in this solemn hour, that to ascribe to me any blessing resulting from the proclamation of God's Word is to sin against God, and to hinder the work of Him who will give His glory to no other, nor His praise to graven images. Cursed be all self-exaltation; to God be the glory!

But, mindful of God and His help, I hope I have not labored in vain here, and for me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by one or another among you, nor do I judge myself. It is the Lord who judges me. I know I have not worked with nearly the earnestness, nor have I shown that zeal demanded by the weightiness of the cause; I am conscious of much unfaithfulness, and am fully convinced that when God takes me into judgment for my conduct in my office, I cannot answer Him one in a thousand. Looking to His cross I will neither condone nor excuse anything in which He reproves me through His Spirit. I will admit: He is righteous and I am guilty; but I also thank my God that the conviction of another is not a law for me, according to which I must conduct my office, but that I have to do with God, and submit humbly in His service to His righteousness and mercy. Looking to His blood and its redeeming and reconciling power I know He will not enter into judgment with His servant, but will let grace stand for justice.

On the other hand, dear friends, I know that in the witness I had the opportunity to give among you over a period of years, there may have been something of imperfection and of self, for which I humble myself before God and you, and ask forgiveness. Forgive me, my dear brothers and sisters, everything in which I have wronged you, in which I have hurt you, in any way displeasing to God. We now part from one another and nothing shall remain in your hearts or mine which would impair or dim a loving remembrance. As God forgives me and you, so forgive me, and let us remember each other in the comfort of His love and mercy.

My dear ones, according to human reckoning I will not proclaim the Word of God to you here again. I expect that most of you will follow me, and if the Lord preserves us in this time of grace, that we will again unite as a congregation in a new home, but until that comes about much will change, and death may claim one and another. We must, therefore, at the present parting, realize that we may not meet in this life again. This thought gives the present farewell an especially solemn character. So for the last time I have the opportunity to invite you: Come to Jesus! To urge and admonish you in the name of Christ: Be reconciled to God! For the last time I come before you, who until now have withheld your hearts from the Lord and have rejected all of God's claims, I come with the urgent appeal: Make haste and save your souls! For the last time it is permitted me to call to you who postpones conversion, the words of the apostle in II Cor. 6: "We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, 'At the acceptable time I have heard you and helped you on the day of salvation.' Behold now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." For the last time I would remind those inclined to rest in a false security of the solemnity of the word, "Therefore while the promise of entering His rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it."

O that none of us would fail to reach it! O that we might all have the great good fortune to meet and greet each other before God's throne, together with those who have washed their clothes in the blood of the Lamb; where there is no tribulation, no mourning, no need, no pain, and where there will be no parting. There

we will have each other forever; there we will no longer grieve each other with our weaknesses. There we will see and rejoice in Him in whom we have believed, in whom we have hoped. There our eternally merciful Redeemer will divinely reward us for faithfulness and self-denial, for obedience to His word and will, with an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, with an inheritance, imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for us. There we will be like Him, there we will see Him as He is. There we will see what an eternal blessing has resulted from the chastening we have experienced in our recent life together. With this reunion in eternity, let us encourage each other at our farewell; let it comfort us in the pain of parting. So, finally, I commit you to God and the word of His grace, which is mighty to build us up and to give the inheritance with those who are sanctified.

I have done this daily in prayer, and my dear congregation remains precious to me in the future, and my entreaty to God will ever be that you might be blessed in the true sense of the word. And you, beloved, remember us lovingly and prayerfully very often, yes, daily. We will need the intercession of all of you on the long and dangerous journey, which we now undertake with God's help, and when that is past there comes a difficult time in another respect: the cares and burdens of pioneering. Then the prayers of our brethren will be an essential undergirding. At our advanced age it will be burdensome to our flesh to endure the privations and renunciation connected with a new settlement. In view of the dark future that awaits us with this move, I hope to prove to those who cannot understand the reasons for our emigration that it is neither presumption nor frivolity that moves us to leave, but that I strive to follow my dear Savior, who says, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me, for whoever would save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." As I observe obedience to the divine will, I seek to serve as an humble example of obedience; to lose the life of self to attain the better eternal life.

-- Translated by Ernest G. Claassen

TRIP EXPERIENCES
and
THE PIONEER YEARS

Leonhard Sudermann had grown up in the Heubuden congregation in Prussia, Germany. On his return from America in 1873 he had given a favorable report of his journey in his home neighborhood in Prussia, causing his friends there also to turn their eyes westward and to seriously consider leaving their comfortable homes to emigrate to America. One young man, Aaron Claassen, had traveled in America and had worked on farms, and had now returned to Germany to bring his family over. A number of others had by this time also decided to emigrate at the same time Sudermann was preparing to leave Russia. Aaron Claassen, with his experience in travel and knowledge of the English language, was very helpful to the others on the whole journey. A contract was made with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company to travel across the ocean in the ship "Rhein." The entire second class cabin section and part of the steerage were reserved. Farms were sold, many chests and trunks were packed, as John Harder Sr. once wrote "with necessities and with some things that were not necessary."

June 15, 1876, was set as the date of departure, and early that morning more than a hundred emigrants assembled at the railroad station of Simonsdorf to board the special train which was to carry them to the seaport of Bremen. At 8:15 A.M. the train moved out of the station, carrying these travelers away from the homes which most of them were never to see again. They rode all day through the countryside of North Germany, reaching Berlin about 8 o'clock in the evening. The service had left much to be desired. There had been no light in the coaches, so some of the emigrants spoke to the railroad officials about this and other matters. They found the officials rather "kratzburstig." This might be translated as rough or abrasive. Certainly it does not mean pleasant and agreeable. However, their request had some effect, and they had somewhat better service from then on. They traveled all night and reached Bremen early the

next morning. Here, by pre-arranged plan, they were met by the managers of several Bremen hotels who took charge of their baggage and tried in every way to make their short stay a pleasant one. The various heads of families spent the forenoon at the office of the steamship company, giving the necessary information as to number in family, age of each, etc., to enable the officials to determine the amounts due from each one. They were asked to return in the afternoon to make their payments and to receive their tickets. The evening was spent in Bremen's beautiful park, a tour conducted by the hotel managers.

The next morning there was some last minute shopping. At 9 A.M. they boarded a train that took them to the shore, then a small steamer which carried them to the ocean liner "Rhein." Many and varied were the impressions and feelings of these travelers in such unfamiliar surroundings and in the strain of parting. We can imagine that the young people may have enjoyed the adventure. The older ones felt the seriousness of leaving the only home they had ever known, to venture to a strange and distant country. The small children, of course, did not understand all that was taking place, and some seem to have viewed the proceedings with distrust; at least, one 6-year-old girl screamed with terror at the idea of going out on that vast expanse of water. But, regardless of the emotions stirred up by the situation, the time of parting came. The friends that had accompanied them from Prussia left, and shortly before 4 P.M. on June 17, the ship moved out of Bremen harbor into the North Sea.

Among this large company on the "Rhein," we are especially interested in those who settled in Butler County and founded the Emmaus Church. There were the families of Bernhard Harder, Abraham Claassen, Heinrich Penner, Dietrich Claassen and Gerhard Regier; also a young man, John Dyck, who shortly after arriving in America married Helena, daughter of Gerhard Regier. Besides these there were four newly-married couples. Two of these were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Regier and Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Regier, who with their father-in-law, Peter Dyck, settled several miles north of the others. The other newly-weds were Mr. and Mrs. Edward Claassen and Mr. and Mrs. John Harder. The last named, John Harder, in his writing for our 50th commemoration in 1926, said young people might envy them, making an ocean voyage as a

wedding trip, and that it would have been very pleasant, if it had not been for seasickness.

The passengers, at their first supper on board ship, found the food very good and partook of it heartily, so that the stewards were kept busy serving them. One steward remarked to another, "Tomorrow it will be easier. There won't be so many." And so it turned out. That night a wind arose, the sea became rough, and John Harder records that many were missing at the breakfast table; and he was one of them.

Since the first full day at sea was Sunday, the captain was asked for permission to hold religious services in the ship's dining room. He not only gave permission but also instructed the stewards to see that all was quiet so the services would not be disturbed. Peter Dyck, as the only minister in the company, led in this service and one on the next Sunday, as well as short daily services held each evening.

Early Monday morning the ship reached Southampton, England. Here the passengers welcomed the opportunity to stand on solid ground again and to see something of England. These experienced farmers took note of the quality of the livestock, mentioning with approval, in their diaries, the horses, cows and sheep they had seen. After a day and a half in Southampton, the ship resumed its journey, moving along the white chalk cliffs of southern England until these faded away in the distance, and they were out on the ocean. The ship was an example of the change from the old to the new. Although driven by steam, it was also equipped with sails which were hoisted whenever the wind was favorable.

The weather was sometimes stormy, sometimes fair. Some were little troubled by seasickness, some when the sea was rough, and some almost constantly. Bernhard Harder suffered most, so that the ship's doctor said he had never seen such a severe case. He spent most of the time lying weak and helpless on the deck, but even this did not entirely dampen his good humor. He once said jokingly to a friend, "Eck kun mi aever Di argere. Du steihst wie en Fuerst, un eck mot ligge wie en Bettler!" (Low German for "I could be provoked at you. You stand like a prince and I must lie like a beggar!")

The young people did not let the rough weather or the uncertain future depress them unduly. Abraham

Claassen, my grandfather, spent some time keeping up his diary and writing letters. He records that at one time the young people were so lively around him that it was difficult to write, and that another time they accidentally upset his ink bottle.

On July 1, 1876, after 11 days on the ocean, they landed in America. There were the usual inspections, and the unloading of the baggage began. To handle the heavy chests, the workers used iron hooks, much like our hay hooks. When they hooked into the bedding, the feather beds began to spill their contents. Protest was made, but one worker said lightly, "Let the feathers fly!"

Everything moved rather too fast for the immigrants anyway. Before unloading of the baggage was completed, they were told it was time to board the trains which were to take them west. Seven families took a train directly to Kansas, where they had friends to receive them in Halstead. The others went to Iowa, to stay until they could decide where to settle.

Two days were spent on the train, and the one party arrived in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, the evening of July 3 in a pouring thunderstorm. The next morning they had their first opportunity to mingle freely with the American people and to observe their way of life. It was the 4th of July, 1876, the 100th anniversary of American independence; and the American way of life seemed to be a very noisy, lively thing indeed. The other party of travelers had reached St. Louis; and they, too, thought that life in America was a very festive affair.

Originally, all these immigrants planned to settle in one place. As settlement possibilities, only Eastern Kansas and Nebraska were considered. It was felt that farther north it was too cold; farther south, too hot; farther west, too dry. After viewing Nebraska and Kansas from Pawnee Rock to Council Grove, six of the families in Halstead bought land in Butler County, buying six sections at six dollars per acre. Those in Mt. Pleasant all went to Nebraska, with the exception of Peter Dyck and Abraham Claassen, who joined their friends in Kansas.

It may be of interest to recall on what farms some of these families located. Gerhard Regier settled on the land just northeast of our church where his grandson, Willie Regier, now lives. Bernhard Harder's original farm is now occupied by his granddaughter, Mrs. John Epp

and her family. Peter Dyck bought the farm north of Elbing now owned by his great-great-grandson, Herman Janzen. He paid $3000 for the half section. Abraham Claassen wanted land with water and timber on it, and to obtain this, settled several miles east of the others. He built a stone house, part of which is still standing and is presently occupied by his grandson, Arnold Claassen.

Building up these farms, most of which had no buildings at all, was a tremendous task, made more so by the fact that the nearest railroad stations were Newton and Peabody. There was a small village three miles east of the church called Plum Grove. Here were several stores and a blacksmith shop. Later a railroad reached El Dorado and some trading was done there. All hauling, of course, was done by horse and wagon. There were no improved roads -- not even graded roads, and no bridges, except near the towns. It was during these early times that a great sorrow came to the Peter Dyck family. Two sons of the family, young men in their twenties, returning from El Dorado found the Whitewater River rather high at the ford four miles east of our church. They attempted to cross but were both drowned.

Breaking the prairie sod was a difficult task. One of those who had a part in it said their plowshares had to be filed every round and hammered out every half day. Rev. Gustav Harder later told how they would dispose of the rattlesnakes. Whenever the plowman saw one, he would take a chain trace from his mule team, kill the snake with it, replace the trace and go on plowing.

In time, things became somewhat easier. After nine years, in 1885, the Missouri Pacific Railroad was built; and the towns of Potwin and Brainerd sprang up. Two years later the Rock Island Railroad was constructed, and Whitewater and Elbing came into being. These towns were far more convenient as shopping centers than Newton and Peabody. The landowners at the station south of our church site were consulted as to naming the station. John Harder declined the honor, so the station was named Brainerd for the other owner.

The late Rev. Jacob Regier was asked to suggest a name for the Rock Island station near his home. He mentioned the names of two German cities, Elbing and Marienburg. The rail official said, "Marienburg is too long.

We'll call it Elbing."

We have traced the course of these pioneers across the ocean, and have recalled something of their first years here. We have seen them at their worship, at their work, and in their lighter moments. We see them, not as storybook saints who are not troubled by temptation. Not only were they flesh and blood, but they were our flesh and blood. Our failings were their failings, our virtues, such as they are, are the same as theirs. What then, can we learn from them? What were the beliefs, the hopes that shaped their lives?

With other Christians they believed in God as Creator, and in Jesus Christ as Redeemer from sin. They felt that in following Him they should strive to show forth what He taught. Love to all men, constant forgiveness, returning good for evil, going the second mile with those who had no right to compel the first; these things were to be the basis for our daily and hourly walk. We must admit that we fall short of this goal, nor did our fathers attain it. Still it is to this deeper insight, this worthier walk that we should dedicate what time remains to us.

-- Ernest G. Claassen

Oats harvest with "push binder" on Dyck brothers farm about 1912.

EXPERIENCES RELATED
at the
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EMMAUS CHURCH
July 5, 1926

The preceding article touches on some of the experiences of the pioneers. We are fortunate in having some first-hand accounts of the early days, written by those who lived through them. On July 5, 1926, the Emmaus congregation commemorated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the families that founded our church. Joining with them were a number from Marion County and from Nebraska who had come over on the same ship.

Following are talks given on that occasion by four of the original immigrants who, at the time of the ocean voyage, were from 12 to 22 years of age.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

If today I am to tell something of our coming to this country 50 years ago, I would like to use as a basis the words we find in Genesis 24:56, "The Lord has prospered my way." It was Eliezer, the pious servant of Abraham, who spoke these words after he had carried out the difficult and responsible charge given him -- to find a wife for Isaac.

We, too, faced serious responsibilities when we could no longer live according to our convictions, and had to leave the fatherland that had become dear to us, and had to seek a new home. This was not easy for our parents who had to leave well-arranged farmsteads on which they had lived for 20, 30 and even 40 years to move to a strange and unknown country. We thought we heard the voice of God saying to us, as to Abraham, "Go from your country to a land that I will show you." We also trusted in the promise to Abraham, "I will bless you, and you shall be a blessing." And today, as we view our settlement and our church, must we not confess that the Lord has made good His promise? He has blessed us materially and spiritually, and I believe He has also made us a blessing. Fifty years ago we had no mission of our own.

Then the first young man was trained to go as a missionary to the heathen. And today there are a goodly number active in the service, and we have been able to help send them to India, China and the American Indians; and we hear that a large number who formerly worshipped dead idols now have learned to know the living God, and in Jesus Christ have found redemption and peace. Let us think of our schools, our deaconess service, and our relief work in Russia and elsewhere. In all these things we have been able to help, and I believe God has fulfilled His promise; it has been a blessing to many. Therefore we say, as we look back on the last 50 years, "The Lord has prospered our way, to Him be the glory!"

It was in the late 60's of the past century that compulsory military service was introduced in Prussia. That meant the cancelling of the exemption we had enjoyed for nearly 200 years, and every able-bodied man between 20 and 45 years could be drafted for military service.

After much petitioning on our part, the government granted us some concessions, but our parents had come to distrust government promises, and began to consider emigration. Russia was first considered, as for 150 years there had been some emigration to there from Prussia; and we young people began to study the Russian language. But we had not accomplished much when the report came that compulsory service was to be introduced in Russia also. There, too, some concessions had been promised; but many lacked confidence in these promises, and began to consider emigration to America. But America was so distant, so unknown, lying beyond the great ocean; these were serious considerations. Then in 1873 eleven delegates arrived from Russia, among them Leonhard Sudermann. These had been chosen to investigate immigration possibilities in America. Elder Wilhelm Ewert of the Thorn congregation joined them as our representative, and these twelve, like those sent by Israel to Canaan, journeyed to America to study conditions and to seek a place to settle.

They traveled over the western states and Canada, and returned that fall after a very stormy return voyage. When elder Wilhelm Ewert gave his report in our Heubuden church, he said, "O how good it is in America! There everyone can live according to his convictions, and in material things we will be able to get along also."

Well, that sounded somewhat more hopeful, but there

were still many misgivings. Some tried to dissuade us from going by saying, "You want to go to America, where for many years the scum of criminals has sought a refuge, and where Indians attack the whites and scalp them; no, that is no land for you!" Others, speaking of Kansas, said, "O, it is so hot there; the snake burrows in the mud, and animals seek the cooling shade; only man must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow!" Well, there was some truth in that; it did cost a lot of sweat. At first, Indians did visit us occasionally, but only as beggars, and even though they were sometimes rather insistent, nothing serious happened.

In the year following the investigation trip, 1874, many in Russia emigrated to America. Elder Ewert also left, and settled near Hillsboro, together with the Funk brothers from Russia, forming the present Brudertal congregation. This led to correspondence, through which we became more familiar with conditions here. Meanwhile we, too, and a number of others had come to a decision; and in the spring of 1876 we sold our farms and prepared for the journey. Chests were built in which many necessities and some non-essentials were packed, and on the 15th of June we boarded our special train at Simonsdorf, and journeyed to Bremen where the North German Lloyd steamer awaited us.

After we had settled ourselves in our cabins the bell sounded for supper, and we went to fully-loaded tables. After the excitement of travel we had calmed down somewhat, and had good appetites, so that the stewards were kept busy serving us. One steward remarked to the other, "Tomorrow will be different; some will be missing." And so it was; our ship had left in the evening, and by morning was on the high seas. When the bell sounded for breakfast many were missing, and I was among them. I did not get to the table for the rest of the voyage, and if my dear young wife had not always brought me something good, I don't know how it would have turned out. I must mention that there were four couples who had been married shortly before our departure and so were on their wedding trips. Only half of them are now here; two of the men and two of the women have already gone home. Those still living are J. W. Regier of Elbing, the widow of Bernhard Regier, the widow of Edward Claassen, and my own insignificance. You young people, who perhaps are

planning a wedding trip may envy us, and think it must have been glorious to take such a wedding trip to America. Yes, it would have been very nice, if ---- it had not been for seasickness. We Harders, especially, can not stand rocking. Perhaps we were rocked too much or too little when we were young; who knows? At least we suffered seriously, especially father, who was often very ill, so that the ship's doctor said he had never seen the like. But the wise Solomon said, "There is a time for everything under the sun," so our voyage finally ended.

Once we had solid ground under our feet, we soon forgot our troubles. After our luggage had gone through customs, we boarded the train and headed west. Our company divided in New York. The majority went to Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, for a temporary stay. We, seven families, went to Halstead, Kansas, where we had relatives. On the evening of July 3 we arrived in St. Louis, where we spent the night, and early in the morning learned what a great national holiday the 4th of July is here, and how it is celebrated. On the evening of July 6th we finally arrived in Halstead, and were warmly welcomed by Uncle and Aunt Abraham Enss and the Peter Wiebes.

We had agreed with our travel companions that after a rest we would look at land together; for we wanted to settle together, if possible. Only the states of Kansas and Nebraska were considered. We thought that farther north it would be too cold, farther south, too hot, and farther west, too dry. When the brethren from Mt. Pleasant came to Kansas, Mr. C. B. Schmidt, agent for the Santa Fe railroad, was ready to show his land. This company still owned considerable land on both sides of the railroad which they had received from the government on the condition that it was to be sold only to settlers, not to speculators. If not sold within a certain period, it would revert back to the government. We drove out from Newton, Halstead and Peabody on six spring wagons, equipped with spades and augers. When we came to available land we stopped, examined the soil, then went on. So we viewed land in several counties, once even going west to the vicinity of Pawnee Rock. The soil was good there, but we did not like the short buffalo grass.

Once, when we were looking at land near Sedgwick, we stopped for dinner at a hotel in town. As we sat down, the waitress named a number of dishes from which we were

to choose. Well, we understood little and merely said, "Yes, bring dinner." It was in the season for roasting ears, and we each received a 10-inch ear of corn. This was something new to us, and we hardly knew what to do with it, but soon saw that Americans at the next table seasoned it with butter, salt and pepper, took hold at each end and thus consumed it. We did not follow their example. I like big ears of corn, but not cooked on a platter.

Others who expected to follow us had requested that we reserve a large area where we could settle together. This was no longer possible near the railroad, as most of the good land had already been taken. Mr. C. B. Schmidt said that even if we settled 15-20 miles from the railroad, there was a good prospect that we would soon get a railroad near us. This proved true; for we got not one, but two roads quite near us.

After we had viewed land in Kansas, we went to Nebraska where we were shown much land. There was still one township which was still almost entirely available; but because it was high and hilly, we did not consider it suitable for farming. We were also told that only spring wheat could be grown there. But after the hard Turkey wheat was introduced, winter wheat does as well there as here.

After viewing the land, some favored Kansas, some Nebraska; and we were not able to agree on a unified settlement in either state. Since it was already late August and we wanted to get on our land and do some building before winter, we six families staying at Halstead decided to remain in Kansas. We soon came here to Butler County, which we had liked best, and bought six sections of land for $6 per acre. As we wanted to make some hay before winter, horses, harness, a wagon and a mower were bought, and on a Monday afternoon we set out from Newton for our new home. Since we had only been here twice, and each time had come on a different road, we had some trouble finding our way, but came to our land by evening where there was only sky and prairie. I had something of an adventure on the way. Whenever I cross the good iron bridge at Whitewater, I remember this first trip here. I had bought a team of young horses which had never been driven much. Halfway down the slope the gray took the bit in his teeth so that I could not hold

him, and we went down the bank faster than I liked; and we went down through trees and brush until we landed in the water. Now was the time for quick action; to stop was not advisable or my loaded wagon would have bogged down. I helped the gray right heartily with my whip, and drove several rods down the stream to where I could get up the bank. I do not mention this as a triumph of my driving. I know that in this, as in many other cases, God has held His protecting hand over me and kept me from harm.

When we had finished making hay, we began hauling lumber from Newton. Later we hauled from Peabody, which was somewhat nearer. We spent the nights at our haystack and slept splendidly. Evenings we made coffee and ate bread and syrup. At breakfast, for a change, we had syrup, bread and coffee.

We soon started building. In Halstead there was a master carpenter by the name of Kruse, who could speak English well. He came with a number of helpers and put up the first building for my parents - a granary, which is still standing. When we had all put up some buildings and had made the most necessary arrangements, we moved in. The first religious service was led by Rev. Wilhelm Ewert in my parents' granary. We had only a half dozen chairs for the old people. Nail kegs were set up, planks laid over them, and the benches were ready. To start the service, a song leader was needed. Father, who had experience as a leader, had been severely injured in a fall from a wagon and had not recovered. Now Uncle Ewert had brought a couple with him who wanted to see our settlement. This man said he could lead our singing; he had often done that in Russia. He selected a hymn and started in, but stopped with the second line; he did not have the right tune. He started once more, but broke down again. His wife said, "I Votsch, so geit daut nich!" (Low German for, "O dad, it doesn't go like that!") Then he proposed singing the melody with la-la-la, and we were to chime in with the words. He did so, and we got into the proper swing, and the singing finally went quite well. I do not mention this as a criticism of this leader; no, we song leaders later had similar experiences. We had the old hymnbooks brought from Germany which had no notes. We sang these slow, solemn melodies by ear, as we had learned them from childhood. It was not easy to strike

the right pitch. We would often start too high. The second stanza would be about right; but by the fourth, the pitch had fallen so low that only a good bass singer could continue. I mention this only so that you young people might know there was more involved in song leading than now, when we not only have an organ, but also a piano.

We had much to learn here in dealing with implements, livestock and many other things. Not only we men, but also our women had much to learn in adjusting to conditions here which were so much different from the old country. There we had two or three maids in every household who were paid $10 to $20 a year. The men received only a little more, so it is no wonder that Social Democracy spread among the people. There was usually a nurse maid, a chamber maid and a cook. These the housewife had to supervise, but did not have to do everything herself, as she does here. There was the bread baking, done in large round brick ovens, which were heated thoroughly for three hours with straw or brush. Twenty-four loaves of dark rye bread were baked at a time. These loaves, while still warm were placed in a sack and hung away upstairs. When they had been there 4-6 weeks they were pretty hard, and it took a good knife to cut them, but they were wholesome. Cooking was done in large kettles. Cabbage and kale were cooked in quantities to last more than one day, and it was said that the kale tasted better each time it was warmed over. Twice a year, in spring and fall, there was a great washday. This took a full week; and since we had no machines, it was done by hand. Now we have the very convenient electric washers.

There, tailors and seamstresses would come into the homes to do the sewing very cheaply; so in some respects it was easier for the women there than in the early days here. Now, though the housewife must usually be the maid of all work, modern conveniences make it possible for her to cook, bake and iron at the same time, to tend the baby, and if she feels so inclined, to sing a little song.

Now that we have recalled many things here and over there, I would like to close with the words of Rev. Ewert 50 years ago: "Although I know that not everything is perfect here, still how good it is in America! The Lord has done all well indeed, and has remembered all our need. Give our God the honor!" -- John Harder, Sr.

AGRICULTURE DURING PIONEER DAYS
July 5, 1926

For this anniversary I have been asked to report on economic conditions of 50 years ago. When our parents with children, relatives and friends, left the dear old home, they also left good economic conditions and moved to a country where these were unknown to them. In faith they went out and in the belief that it was God's will they established their farms here. In the past 50 years we have experienced that God has been with us and has blessed us beyond asking and comprehension - and for that we thank God!

We arrived at Halstead, Kansas, on July 6, 1876, and from there did our land viewing, which resulted in our settling here in Butler County. We young people enjoyed all this. Whether the older people were always so happy about it is a question. But of my parents I cannot say that they ever regretted emigrating and settling here. I can still recall that old Uncle Bernhard Harder once said, after he had completed his house, "Eck well met Gurke nu doch nich meha tusche welle." ("I would not want to trade back for what I had in Gurken.") Gurken was the name of his village in Germany.

After we had selected our land, we began working here in late August. Our first house was 8 by 16 feet. Six 2 by 4's eight feet long were set in the ground, then 1 by 6 boards were nailed on the sides, top and one end. The south end was left open for an entrance. Prairie hay was stacked over this frame, and the house was complete. With some hay inside for a bed, we slept as well as today on springs and mattresses.

The land on which we settled is the section on which my brothers John and Gustav Regier now live. Here we spent the first night - my father, my two brothers and I.

After breakfast next morning, we prepared to look over our land. It seemed large to us, since in Germany such an area would have been occupied by ten or more families. It was rather foggy at first, and we could not see much; but the fog gradually disappeared. We had driven about half a mile when we saw two riders coming toward us. Horrors! they were naked, bows and arrows on their backs. We turned aside, they waved, we waved but kept driving sideways at a walk. They rode off, and we

drove away. Later individual Indians passed by and stopped in, but were no longer a terror for us; nor did they ever trouble us.

Our family and other relatives stayed over two months with our relative, Abraham Entz. We moved out here on the 19th of September, and had our first frost that night. Our time at first was taken up with hauling of stones and lumber. Of the buildings which were put up for the first six families, probably most are still standing.

Our builder was Mr. O. Kruse of Halstead. It should be mentioned that Mr. Kruse was of great help to our settlement, as he understood both English and German. By Christmas all the families had moved in.

In the spring of 1877 several additional families joined this settlement. Among them was the memorable Leonhard Sudermann, with whom our church life began. On April 25th I had the privilege of bringing Rev. Sudermann and his family out from Newton on a farm wagon.

In May of this year our chief task was to bring the prairie under cultivation. This was not easy for us as new immigrants. We had to learn without teachers. We had to keep a hammer, a wrench and file always at hand. The plowshare would often get bent in cutting the tough prairie roots, and would need to be hammered straight again. The share had to be filed every round, and sharpened every half day.

The first wheat was sown in the fall of this year. Dairying and cattle raising had been started in spring. There was pasture enough, and we could make as much hay as we desired. It did not bring much, but it did not cost much. It gave us work, and that was good for us as new immigrants.

Clothes were cheap, too. Trousers were 75 cents to a dollar per pair. At field work we often went barefoot to save shoe leather.

In 1878 the first binders were bought for wheat cutting. Again there was much for us to learn. These binders used wire for tying. In my experience, they worked very well mornings and evenings when it was cool. In the heat of the day, the tying mechanism did not work well. The agents and experts thought that the pulleys and guides over which the wire ran became too hot. They could not make it work, and we certainly could not.

Others may have had better results. Only those who had experience 45 years ago can know how much better the present machines work.

We can thank our early settlers for beginning immediately with both livestock and grain farming, for mixed farming is always better than raising only wheat, as we can learn from areas where wheat is grown exclusively. An old proverb says, "Wheat raising makes rich fathers and poor sons."

We would hardly have thought that our first buildings, now nearly 50 years old, would have lasted so long. There is probably only one barn that still has the original shingle roof, but that was painted with red paint several times in the early years. That was certainly more profitable than now when much red color is used on faces, which is probably a relic of Indian times.

We lived economically, and money was not spent until it was on hand or until one was sure of it coming in. If one had to borrow, interest was 2% per month, equal to 24% per year. One had to figure carefully and either avoided borrowing or paid as soon as possible. The high rate of interest was a blessing for us so that we did not borrow recklessly, only to find ourselves unable to pay.

We used farm wagons to get to our meetings. Seats were made of planks laid on nail kegs, and we were just as happy as today in modern pews. Farm wagons took the place of modern automobiles, but they were somewhat slower. Economic conditions were very difficult at first. It took a long day to haul lumber from Newton or Peabody over the prairie roads. We had to learn patience. When we bought horses they did not understand our language and still less our whips. There were bridges only near the towns, and throwing down a few stones in the fords did not help much. Later there were small bridges and culverts. Then there generally was a mudhole on each side of the bridge. In July of 1877 I had to drive at night to summon a doctor, a round trip of 38 miles across the prairie in five hours. That was a fast trip, and the horses were not overdriven.

We bought our first seed wheat in Halstead for 75 cents a bushel. The harvest was 10-12 bushels per acre, for which we received 50-60 cents in Peabody, but we hoped for better crops and higher prices. But yields went down to 4-7 bushels. Once I was sent by my parents

to Peabody with a load of wheat and was offered only 25 cents a bushel. I felt like taking the wheat home, but we needed lumber so I left the wheat at the elevator, paid storage and insurance, held it over two months and received 45 cents net over costs. Then we could say, as a later immigrant often said, "Jo, daut sent Tostaend, do es koen Drebbil bie to ranni!" (Yes, those were conditions where one can't break into a trot.) But we kept on farming, and plowed under the morning dew. Our parents followed the old motto, "Early to bed and early to rise."

Later we had better crops and higher prices. We were happy when we got 65-75 cents per bushel for wheat. Our yields were as high as 35 bushels an acre. Corn yields varied widely. In 1889 we had 75 bushels per acre; in 1890 only a feed crop. In April of that year I paid 13½ cents for corn, in November, 50 cents. Our best oats crop was in 1883. My parents had 101 bushels, Abraham Claassen at Plum Grove had 115. But these high yields of corn and oats came only once in 50 years.

In closing, I would like to say with regard to economic conditions: Ask Jesus to be with you, work and pray, plow under the morning dew, discriminate among those who come to collect money; then it will be well with our economic conditions, and we will continue to be able to help the needy.

-- Gerhard Regier

HOUSEHOLD CONDITIONS
July 5, 1926

When we left Germany, I was considered a little lady and knew nothing of housekeeping. I never felt any desire to go back to Germany. Our dear parents and many friends were with us; every day brought something new to see or hear. Traveling in such a large company was very interesting, especially the sea voyage. Unfortunately, I was one of those who often had to stay away from the table. The kitchen smells were nauseating to us. The old ladies longed for a simple water dumpling soup, and asked the cook if he would prepare some as a favor to them, which he was willing to do if they would prepare the little dumplings. So the soup was prepared and

tasted very good. He also tried prune noodle soup, but that did not turn out so well.

When we reached our destination, Halstead, Kansas, we were brought to our lodgings at 2:00 A.M. I do not remember how we found things at Uncle Enz's. Mrs. Edward Claassen related that in the house allotted to them they found a table laden with food, which surprised them very much. It was Mrs. Kruse who had provided this, and who later helped the immigrants with advice and assistance. Her husband was a carpenter who later put up our buildings.

The iron cookstoves here were new to us. It was very interesting to us that we could bake and cook at the same time. In the old country we had the big brick ovens outside in which up to 30 loaves could be baked. Cake and rolls for Sunday were usually bought from a woman who carried them from house to house in a basket on her back.

Later, after the land here in Butler County had been bought, I received permission to accompany my brothers from Halstead to Butler County to cook for them. Where they worked a fire was made for cooking, but the food was not very appetizing because it tasted of smoke. Once I was to fry potatoes and felt very important, but did not know if I had enough shortening. Then my oldest brother came and said that eggs should always be added, which I did. In time my cooking improved somewhat.

After some buildings had been put up, my parents bought 10-12 cows which we girls had to milk.

Then we began to have services on Sunday in the homes. The hosts provided the noon meal. We had prune noodle soup, bread and ham. Pie was then unknown to us.

There was a great difference between the housewife's duties in the old fatherland and here. There had been plenty of servants there to assist our mothers with the work. Here it must have been hard for them to carry on without such help, but as we grew up we realized (as my husband recently wrote to his brother in Germany), "If there is a country where the saying 'In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread' is observed, it is here in America."

I am already 66 years old, 14 years older than my dear mother was when she left Germany. Time is flying, so let us take to heart the saying, "Make haste and save yourselves."

-- Mrs. J. P. Andres

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
July 5, 1926

On such an occasion as today, when we have looked into the past and the reasons for emigration, then a word on further spiritual development must not be lacking. If, as Christians, we have a proper perspective, if we regard this earthly life as a time of preparation for the perfect life above, then our spiritual welfare is infinitely more important than our material concerns. Let us try to present something of the origin of the Emmaus Church.

When did the Emmaus Church have its beginning? It is not possible to set an exact date from the records of our first elder, Leonhard Sudermann. It was probably early March, 1877, when he bought the land on which this church stands and took over the leadership of the group that became the church. But was that really the beginning? No, no more than the life of a plant begins when the first shoots appear above ground. The origin of all life lies much deeper, and is ultimately rooted in God, who gives every living thing the power to germinate, to grow, and to bear fruit. The hidden seed for the various Mennonite congregations that developed here had been sown long before the first Mennonite settlers trod America's shores; it took only the winds of intolerable persecution to carry those seeds here, where they came to new life in the soil of religious tolerance and freedom. Our Mennonite people seem inclined to keep separate from others. Does it not seem as if it was God's plan to disperse them over all the world, to compel them to show themselves as the salt of the earth - something they had not done voluntarily? This seems to be the case if we take a closer look at the history of the West Prussian Mennonites who emigrated to America in the late 70's of the past century. Probably there was no one in that travel company on the steamer Rhein who did not expect that this and following groups would form a segregated settlement and congregation. Although I was then only 12 years old, it is still vivid in my memory, that before and during the emigration it was always emphasized that wherever we went, an area should be reserved large enough, not only for the first settlers, but also for those who might come later. But what happened? Already in the choice of a temporary base, from which to make trips to various areas to view land,

there was a division into two groups. Some of the company, who had relatives at Halstead, found lodging there, while the others looked about for a place where temporary housing might be found more readily than in an undeveloped area. This latter group, to which my parents belonged, found a leader in Aron Claassen, who had already been in America, and had returned to Germany to bring his family over. Brother Claassen had become acquainted with the family of Cornelius Janzen from Russia, who lived in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; and since a special magnet was drawing him back to this family, it was only natural for our company to follow him there. Brother Janzen had rented houses and had provided otherwise most generously for the new arrivals.

During the land-viewing trips, preferences for Kansas or Nebraska became evident, and since not enough goodwill was shown to reconcile these differences, one group settled here, while the other founded a congregation in and around Beatrice, Nebraska.

Those settling here were without spiritual leadership until Rev. Peter Dyck decided to settle near the present town of Elbing. This was during the winter of 1876-77, and thus the need for Sunday services was met.

In the late summer of 1876 elder Leonhard Sudermann had come to Summerfield, Illinois, with a number of other families who were looking for a place to settle. Through the Lord's grace, Brother Sudermann was willing to serve our church as elder.

As already mentioned, the exact date of the origin of a church cannot be determined even if the day and the hour were known, for the germ and the determination to found a church were unshakably fixed in the hearts of our fathers, and if God had not helped us to form an organization through Brother Sudermann, He would assuredly have done it one way or another.

When elder Sudermann expressed his willingness to take over the leadership of the church, it was a very satisfactory solution of a difficult problem for the new settlers. He served faithfully until his death in 1900. He was assisted by his brother Abraham and by Peter Dyck, who has already been mentioned. Several years later Abraham Sudermann moved to Newton, while Rev. Dyck and others organized the Zion Church at Elbing, and thus separated from this church. Elder Sudermann at once arranged

for youth instruction on Sunday afternoons. This continued until 1904 when a Sunday School before the service on Sunday morning was begun, as we still have it today.

In January of 1884, Edward Claassen and Gustav Harder were chosen as ministers. Each of these later served the church as elder, the latter until his death in 1923.

The first meeting house of the church was built in 1878 under the supervision of Elder Sudermann and Gerhard Regier, Sr. It was used until 1908 when it was replaced by the present building.

In retrospect, it might be useful to try to understand what God is saying to our people through His leading of this church. One might ask: Was it really only typical Mennonite disagreement, which against God's will brought about a division with regard to the place of settlement; or did God use this weakness of His children to realize His plans for them, to give them greater opportunities and also greater responsibilities? If the latter is true, as I firmly believe, how have we shown ourselves worthy of our charge? Even if we may in general be regarded as good, fairly peaceable and God-fearing citizens, has our walk always been such a witness for our Lord and Master as it could have been? Do we pay our debt of gratitude to our country by contributing as much as lies in our power toward a righteous and God-fearing government, be it through intercession alone, or intercession combined with participation at the ballot box, and active cooperation with all endeavors that serve the welfare of the land? And if we must admit that on the whole we have proved unworthy of our opportunities, let us at least, on this day so important for our country and for us, resolve with God's help to be a better salt, in the right sense of the word, than we have been hitherto. That is true patriotism, which can only be a blessing for us and for our land.

-- John H. Claassen

The Newton Herold reported that the climax of the evening program was the song "America" sung by children of the immigrants who were born here. Our elder, Rev. B. W. Harder (the oldest in the group), took the youngest singer in his arms as they sang.

90th ANNIVERSARY

July 3, 1966

Sunday morning services:

Sermon - "Remembrance of Blessing" - Rev. H. J. Dyck

Sermon - "From 'Here' to 'There'" - Rev. L. R. Amstutz

Fellowship Meal at Noon

Afternoon Features:

Collection of local antiques
Pictures on Automatic projector in library

Evening Service, 7:30 p.m.:

Master of ceremonies - Alfred Regier
Hymn
Scripture and prayer - Edgar Busenitz
Choral group
Play - "The Decision"
Instrumental Ensemble
History of Emmaus in slides
Summary of Day by Alfred Regier

The play, "The Decision," depicted a Mennonite family in Germany who was considering emigrating to America.

Father and mother (Mr. and Mrs. Walter Harder) are planning to send their 17-year-old son (John Klaassen) to America and follow him in several years. The teen-age daughter (Janet Toevs) thinks this is frightening. The younger daughters (Sharon Entz and Nancy Miller Swartzendruber) think it would be exciting. The maid (Mrs. Donovan Claassen) takes care of the Harder's baby (James Claassen).

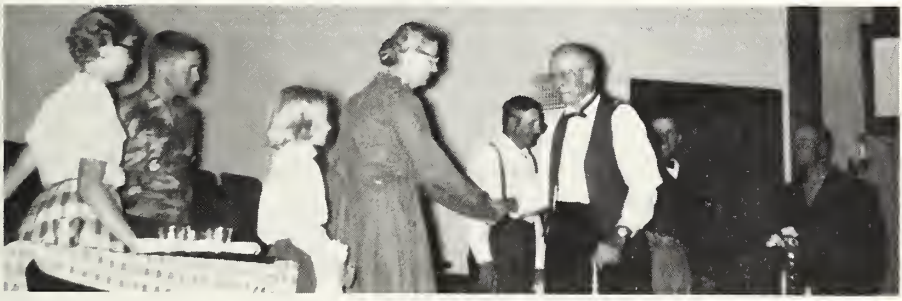
Uncle and Aunt (Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Thierstein) drop in and offer some negative comments about America and prospects of selling the farm and leaving relatives. Two of the twelve men who have toured America in search of a place to settle come in and offer their views of the new

land beyond the great water. (The roles of these two men were acted out by Walter Penner and Donald Harder.)

Mrs. John Epp and Mrs. Arlo Ewy wrote the play, and Mrs. Henry Claassen directed it.

Committee for the 90th Celebration:

Rev. L. R. Amstutz
Alfred Regier
Mrs. Kenneth Toevs
Walter A. Claassen
Mrs. Erich Penner



Uncle (C. B. Thierstein) is bidding farewell to his niece (Mrs. Walter Harder) and wishing them well in America.

Baby (James Claassen) will have nothing to do with his mother's aunt (Mrs. C. B. Thierstein) nor his mother (Mrs. Walter Harder) who looks on. He clings to the maid (Mrs. Donovan Claassen). His mother comments that maybe whe will get to take care of her own children in America.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

May 29-30, 1976

A committee was elected by the church to organize the commemoration of our centennial. These were Ernest Claassen, Mrs. B. G. Harder, Mrs. Henry Claassen, Frank Busenitz and Walter Penner. This committee appointed the following committees:

Foods - Mrs. B. E. Busenitz, Mrs. Olga Busenitz, and Mrs. Walter Harder

Photographs - John Claassen, Mrs. John Busenitz, and Mrs. Catherine Regier

Slides - Willard Wiebe, Elbert Esau, and Wilburt Wiebe

Exhibits - Mrs. Edgar Harder, Miss Frieda H. Wiebe, and Mrs. Walter Entz

Cemetery tours - Alfred Regier, Rudi Penner, Albert Claassen, Henry Thiessen, Ralph Claassen, and Richard Harder

Welcoming - Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Klaassen, Mr. and Mrs. Willard Reimer and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Toevs

Lodging - Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Busenitz

Night Watchmen - Kenneth Penner, Eldo Wiebe, Douglas Claassen, and Dennis Busenitz

These committees appointed helpers as they felt necessary.

The choir, church ushers and parking committee all carried their share of responsibility.

Festivities began at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, May 29. One could look at photographs grouped by families displayed

on the walls of Sunday School rooms.

The main basement was filled with exhibits pertinent to Emmaus history as well as souvenirs shared by our missionaries from the countries in which they serve.

Guides were posted in the cemetery to show guests around and tell something about the people whose names were etched in the marble slabs.

Mrs. Alfred Wiebe and Helen Entz had set up a wood-burning stove north of the church under the trees. They were heating sadirons and then ironing clothes with them.

Miss DeLene Schmidt was seated at a spinning wheel making yarn out of a bundle of wool.

Men had brought scythes and were cutting rye two miles north of the church. This was then tied with a ribbon of straw and shocked. Maynard Krehbiel was there also with his horses and a walking plow. Many men tried to revive the lost art of guiding a plow.

Alfred Busenitz had brought a team of horses and a wagon. These went up and down the road west of church always loaded with children.

By this time an appetite had been created, so about 825 people made their way to the Herman Toevs shed where a traditional meal was being served. A banner reading, "Come and Dine," was hung over the door. The menu consisted of rye bread, ham, cheese, homemade butter, applesauce with currants, Berliner Pfannkuchen and coffee cake.

At 7:30 we gathered in the sanctuary for the evening program. The first period was spent singing German hymns. Then the slide projector was turned on, and we saw pictures of the elders who had served us in the last 100 years. Wilburt Wiebe gave a brief resume of their lives as well as introduced us to some of their descendants living here today. Next we saw slides of many facets of Emmaus history. The slide committee had gleaned these from many family pictures and were also prepared to give a very interesting narration to go with the slides.

Sunday morning, May 30, 1976, dawned bright and clear after a bit of wind and rain during the night. The church was packed to capacity for the Sunday School hour. There were no individual classes, so we all met in the sanctuary. The topic for the hour was "Motivations for Emigration." Walter Penner, acting as chairman, pointed out that our forefathers had many and mixed motives for coming to America. A brief historical scan brought out

the following points:

1517 - Just 25 years after Columbus discovered America, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses on the door of the Wittenburg Cathedral. In these he asserted that the Bible, not the church, is our authority.

1525 - On January 21 of this year, Georg Blaurok, Conrad Grebel and others gathered in the home of Felix Manz. They felt the Reformation was not going far enough. They wanted adult baptism and separation of church and state. A pail was filled with water and these men baptized each other using a tin dipper.

1536 - Menno Simons resigned as priest to become an Anabaptist.

1620 - Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. These were people from England who took God's Word seriously.

1621 - The Laddekop Mennonite Church was started in the Vistula Delta of Germany. This is the area where most of us have our family roots.

1870 - Mennonites in Russia lost their exemptions as German colonists.

1873 - Twelve men came from Russia and Germany to America to look at the land. They were instructed to look for a land where they could 1) Practice freedom of religion; 2) Be exempt from military service; 3) Find enough land in one area to settle as a community; 4) Have German church services. They were also asked to negotiate for a group discount on the ship and train fare for the immigrants.

1876 - Eight families settled in Butler County on the Kansas prairies. One of these were newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. John Harder, Sr. Their grandson, Walter Harder, shared with us that for his grandparents coming here was exciting, but for those with young children it meant sacrifice. They emigrated because they believed the Bible from cover to cover. They believed in the way of peace. They did not come for fortune or honour but for

the sake of their children.

1880 - The Heinrich Thiessen family came to this community from Russia. Their grandson, Edgar, told us that his grandfather had been a storekeeper in Russia and when he came here he had to farm, but he never enjoyed it. After he died, it was learned from a letter he had written to relatives in Canada that he was very discouraged about conditions in Kansas. In the letter he also mentioned that at times his longing for his Russian home became so great he had to leave the house, go out to the field and weep.

Edgar Thiessen commented that our forefathers had made tremendous sacrifices to come here. What sacrifices are we willing to make for our faith and our children?

1890 - The Jacob Wiebe family came from Germany. Their granddaughter, Frieda, pointed out that her grandparents had left a lovely home surrounded by beautiful flower gardens. They also faced uncertainties like a different climate, different crops and less educational opportunities.

Military exemption for their sons, however, was important enough to them that they held a farm sale. After everything was sold, Mr. Wiebe commented, "Did we act in haste? Do we really need to go? Should we stay after all?" To this his wife replied, "We have made up our minds. We have sold everything. Let's not look back now. After all, we are not doing this for ourselves. We are doing this for our children and their children."

Then friends and relatives came to beg them to stay or bid farewell. Often the question was, "Will we ever see each other again?" The responding comment often was, "If not here, then in heaven."

They paid the price. We reap the benefits.

1893 - The John Wiebe family came from Russia. His grandson, Wilburt Wiebe, said that John Wiebe had served as a non-combatant soldier in Germany but did not want his sons to serve in the military. In 1877 he went to Russia and was married there in 1879. They made their home in Russia until coming to America with their family.

Mr. Wiebe's home church (Heubuden) in Germany was

divided about the issue of military training. 80% decided to remain in Germany in spite of the military program. 20% decided to emigrate and eventually settled near Whitewater, Elbing and Newton, Kansas, and Beatrice, Nebraska.

Their attitudes toward peace, nationalism and the simple life are gaining new appreciation by many today.

1908 - Edward Esau came here from Russia as a young unmarried man. His son, Elbert, felt that his father might have come here for a three-fold reason: adventure, economic opportunity and to escape militarism.

Although he could have gone into the forest service as a conscientious objector, he would still have been subject to the military uniform and regulations.

He came here on a five-year visitor's visa. Shortly after arriving here, he enrolled in Bible School at Hillsboro. He chose the English course even though a German course was available. Evidently he was hoping to stay, and he did.

1912 - The Henry Schwindt family came here from Russia. They had a German Lutheran background. His grandson, Bud Schwindt, mentioned that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get out of Russia then. The examining doctor would lift the eyelid of their two-year-old boy (Bud's father) and break a little blood vessel with a tweezers. Then he would reject the little boy because of his bloody eye. Finally, his mother put him under her large peasant skirt and smuggled him out.

They were scheduled to leave on the Titanic but missed it and had to take the next boat. Upon arriving in America, Mr. Schwindt spent all his money on train tickets. They got as far as Kansas City. Bud did not know why his grandparents came, but he was glad they did.

The chairman closed the hour with a comment he had heard his mother make. Mr. and Mrs. Erich Penner had gone to Germany in 1936 to visit friends and relatives. After returning, she mentioned that the statue of liberty looked very good when coming from the East.

After a short break the audience reassembled for the worship service. Mr. Bill Wiebe was the worship leader. He asked all the people who had come over 1000 miles to

the celebration to stand. He estimated that over 20 people stood. Because of the great number of visitors, it was not practical to read their names as we normally do.

The choir favored us with the songs, "Praise Ye the Lord the Almighty," and "Was Kann Es Schoenres Geben." This was a favorite of Uncle Leonhard Sudermann and was sung in German.

Greetings were read from the following churches: Swiss Mennonite, Whitewater; Palmyra Baptist, Benton; Zion Mennonite, Elbing; and First Mennonite of Beatrice, Nebraska.

The main part of the worship service consisted of the last sermon our first elder, Uncle Leonhard Sudermann, preached to his congregation in Russia 100 years earlier. This was translated into English by Ernest G. Claassen and delivered by Rev. Lubin Jantzen, our interim pastor. See page 34 for the complete sermon.

After the worship service 600 people ate dinner at the Herman Toevs shed. Ladies of the church had prepared the food and brought it to church with them.

The afternoon service was to provide a forward look. Tim Busenitz led the congregation in singing "My Country, Tis of Thee," "Praise Him, Praise Him," and "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

Allen Busenitz read Deuteronomy 6:1-15 and led in prayer.

Greetings were read from the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Kleinsasser, pastor elect of Emmaus
Salem Mennonite Church of Gridley, Illinois
Mr. and Mrs. Laverne Busenitz, missionaries to Germany
Gertrude Roten of Elkhart, Indiana
First Mennonite Church of Newton, Kansas
Alma Regier Dyck, Paso Robles, California
Annabelle Entz Wells, Axtell, Nebraska
Esther Graves Carleton, Wichita
Mr. and Mrs. John Reimer, Watrous, Saskatchewan
Phebe Epp Cressman, Scottdale, Pennsylvania
Virginia Claassen, Japan
Mr. and Mrs. Curt Claassen, Berne, Indiana
Louis Poppe, former pastor of Federated Church at Whitewater

It was noted that there were only two former pastors of Emmaus still living. Rev. Walter Dyck of Danvers, Illinois, sent greetings. Rev. L. R. Amstutz came to the pulpit to give a few words of greeting.

The choir sang "There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place," and "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring."

Rev. Albert Epp, pastor of the First Mennonite Church at Newton gave the main address of the afternoon entitled, "Lest We Forget." See complete text on page 79.

After a few announcements by Rev. Jantzen, we sang, "To God Be the Glory." Jacob Leyenaar then led us in a closing prayer and benediction.

Willard Wiebes' children look at the picture display that pertains to their family.

Local men try their hand at guiding a walking plow. Willard Reimer is driving the horses which belong to Maynard Krehbiel.

Here grain is cut with an old-fashioned scythe and tied into bundles with a ribbon of straw.

Mrs. B. G. Harder poses among the exhibits.

Mrs. Willard Reimer stands ready to explain the background behind some of the many exhibits in the church basement.

Miss Delene Schmidt operates a spinning wheel to make thread out of a bundle of wool.

Mrs. Alfred Wiebe and Helen Entz demonstrate the sad iron.

Alfred Regier leads a group on a cemetery tour.

Herman Toevs' brome field was turned into a parking lot.

The Herman Toevs shed is used as a dining hall.

Mrs. Herbert Thiessen, Elmer and Olga Klaassen assist in preparing the meal.

Many of the folks involved in the planning that went into the Centennial celebration.

The following address was delivered by Dr. Albert H. Epp, pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Newton, at the final service of the Centennial celebration.

LEST WE FORGET
Deuteronomy 6:1-15

In July of 1876, my German-speaking grandparents, the Bernard Harders, arrived in St. Louis, greeted by a terrifying display of commotion and fireworks. Fear gripped them. Had they foolishly swapped the quiet farms of Prussia for a war-ravaged frontier in America's heartland? Anxieties were finally allayed when they learned that the gunfire was a 4th of July celebration to commemorate America's 100th birthday.

Today, as we assemble for our 100th anniversary, America celebrates its bicentennial. Dare any of you deny that the 18,000 Mennonites who came in the decade following 1874 to these Midwestern prairies were led here in the providence of God? They took root in this American soil--a soil of freedom and opportunity. They have thrived on its benefits.

Sidney E. Mead, past president of the American Society of Church History, writes that the great Philip Schaff, after teaching ten years in America at Mercersburg Seminary in Pennsylvania, returned to Germany in 1854. He urged German scholars to take note of the significance of the American religious scene. It is inaccurate, he insisted, to view the church in America as a little footnote to a great European Protestant Reformation; no, America was unique with its voluntaryism and its pluralism. Schaff said, "The glory of America is free Christianity, independent of secular government, and supported by the voluntary contributions of a free people. This is one of the greatest facts in modern history."

In 1945, Kenneth Scott Latourette finished his monumental seven volumes, entitled A History of the Expansion of Christianity. In the final volume, he appraises the work of God in America. Here are three of his dramatic claims:

1. Christianity has not been on a 400-year wane since the Reformation. Between 1800 and 1950

(1½ centuries), more millions were evangelized in America and swept into the Church, than in any other country anywhere, at any time, in the world. After all, in 1776 when our nation was born, only 5% of Americans were church members.

2. "The fashion in which millions of Christians in America have voluntarily contributed financially to the propagation of their faith at home and abroad, has in magnitude been without precedent in the history of Christianity, or any other religion, or set of ideas."

3. Never has a country of the world sent as many missionaries to foreign soil to propagate its faith as has the Church in America. This is especially true of the "free churches." In the year of 1960, approximately 40,000 United States missionaries served overseas in some capacity!

William Warren Sweet (1881-1959), another student of American History, astutely observes that France had the awful French Revolution; America had the wonderful Holy Spirit Revival. The Church was a powerful force on the frontier, shaping American religion and having a civilizing effect on a half-barbarous people. Franklin Littell claims that our democracy and religious setting in America owes a much bigger debt to the left wing of the Reformation than to the State Church reformers.

Into this American religious milieu our Anabaptist Mennonite forefathers came a century ago--18,000 strong from Russia alone in the decade 1873-1883--to settle the buffalo pasture lands from Oklahoma to Manitoba. Additional immigrants came from Prussia, like those who erected Emmaus on these windswept prairies of Butler County in 1876. America has been our land of Canaan--flowing with milk and honey. We have tasted prosperity beyond our fondest dreams. We have worked and worshipped within the dictates of our conscience for a century, enveloped by America's freedoms.

Today, on this Centennial Sunday, we are congregated to praise God together. You have extended to me this rare, undeserved honor of speaking at this service. Other sons of the church, or friends in our brotherhood,

could have served you so inspiringly. On the other hand, when I visualize Elder Leonhard Sudermann driving his horse and buggy to Newton countless times to minister at First Mennonite, I know we have a debt to return.

My chosen text is Deuteronomy 6:10-12: "When you eat and are full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord."

Israel, in the bondage of Egypt, squirming under the whip of the taskmasters, agonized prayerfully for generations, seeking deliverance. Jehovah-God heard. He delivered. The Exodus is the apex of salvation--history in the Old Testament. One refrain from the Mosaic tradition permeates the Biblical record: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." Adversity is tolerable, but prosperity can be lethal. Israel in the land of Canaan enjoyed the luxury of cities already built, wells already dug, and vineyards already planted, and risked the loss of faith. God warns--when you are full, beware, lest you forget the Lord.

The immigration of our Mennonites to America in 1876 was a rescue from the lion's den of persecution, militarism, revolution and tyranny. Free at last! Free after a century of horrible torture and death in the dungeons of Europe. Free after two centuries of a muzzled and compromising silence on the farms of Europe. Free to be ourselves! After the rigors and privations of the early Kansas years--and they were hard years--prosperity came: barns filled up, herds multiplied, acreages increased, bank accounts swelled. But in every depression, every drought, every tornado, every war and every illness, you heard the Word of God: "When you eat and are full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of 'Europe,' out of the house of bondage."

Our text in Deuteronomy 6 is clear. God does not wish to be forgotten. Oh, how near-sighted we can be! In our zeal to remember, we are prone to confuse Christ and culture. As Mennonite migrants in a foreign land, we preserved with determination the German language explaining which to use: der esel or die esel or das esel. We perpetuated the German foods like pflaumen moos, schinken fleisch, and roll kuchen. We protected the Prussian names like Epp, Wiebe, Regier, and Claassen. Wherever Mennonite hearts have become ignited with the flame of

evangelism, the rallying point has not been the German name, the German language, or the German recipes; rather the one and only, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

Permit me to illustrate this in two personal ways. First, a memory from my childhood. When I was in high school, my parents informed me that I was required to read up to page 100 in the German Mittel Stufe before I could drive our new 1946 "W.C." Allis Chalmer tractor. Our parents were determined to use every gimmick to inculcate the mother tongue--including using the German language in daily conversation. But later the tables turned--my mother became interested in teaching the gospel stories to unreached boys and girls in Wichita, and felt her English was inadequate. She appealed to her own children to help her improve her English!

Secondly, I draw on an experience stemming from our ministry in Downey, California, in the 60's. A little Baptist Church in a neighboring town dissolved and a new family started attending our church, the Immanuel Mennonite Church. Soon they joined and became Mennonites. This family carried the name Johnston. Their occupation: investing money. They owned a farm in Illinois, a radio station in San Francisco, a factory in Compton, California, an orchard in Southern California, and many other things. Just last year, Mr. Johnston attended the Mennonite Relief Sale at Reedley, California. A restored 1923 Chevy Roadster was put on auction. He gave the successful bid of $5800. Someone overheard two men talk. "Who bought that car?" "A Donald Johnston from Los Angeles." The other man shook his head, "Isn't it a shame that some Mennonite didn't buy it!" How often we are unaware of how culture-bound we have become. Our text does not urge Israel to remember the culture of Egypt--but they are warned, lest they forget the Lord!

According to our text in Deuteronomy 6, two prime responsibilities were imposed upon Israel--a Commitment to the Word, and a Commitment to the Work: "Oh Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it..." 6:3.

I. Listening to the Word

The passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 urges Israel to listen to the Lord God and love him with all their hearts. These words were also to be inscribed on the hearts of

the children through diligent teaching. "You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house." (6:7-9 L.B.)

In the best sense, we are called Biblicists. The Bible is our sole authority for faith and life. We accept the Bible as the very infallible word of God. Harold Bender wrote in the Mennonite Encyclopedia, "From the court records of the Anabaptists who were seized at the beginning of the Reformation Era, it is at once evident that they possessed an amazing knowledge of the Bible." John C. Wenger in Even Unto Death wrote: "From the moment of their conversion they became avid readers of scripture, memorizing favorite passages and preparing themselves to give Biblical reasons for their faith."

In the year of 1544, John Claess, a Dutch Anabaptist, wrote his wife from an Amsterdam prison, shortly before he was martyred: "My dearly beloved wife...in no wise depart from the Word of the Lord...I request you to bring up my children in all good instruction, to have my testament read to them, and to bring them up in the Lord, according to your ability as long as you remain with them."

For 100 years, you as a congregation have been blessed with ministers who have honored and expounded the Bible. Gustav Harder, in 1884, was elected minister of Emmaus. It is reported, "He was often deeply touched with the truths of the Bible...he seldom preached a sermon without being moved to tears." Your first elder was Rev. Leonhard Sudermann (1877-1900), who preached the Bible zealously. After his baptism at the Heubuden Mennonite Church near Marienburg, Prussia in 1838, he moved with his widowed mother to South Russia in 1841. He married Maria Sudermann two years later. In 1859, he was elected to replace his father-in-law, Rev. Abraham Sudermann, as minister of the church in Berdyansk. His first sermon text was Isaiah 40:6-11: "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the Word of our God stands forever." H. P. Krehbiel, in his history of our conference, published in 1898, records that Leonhard Sudermann established in his church one of the first Sunday Schools in Russia.

Before we reached America, a conference was called at

West Point, Iowa, May 28 and 29, 1860, to unite all Mennonites. Some 128,000 Mennonites already lived in the U.S. and Canada. According to H. P. Krehbiel, when the eighth General Conference met at Wadsworth, Ohio, November 25, 1878, the Mennonites agreed on three tenets: non-resistance, adult baptism, and refusal of the oath. However, new churches affiliating that year wanted a better defined statement; so a committee of seven was elected to study existing catechisms and confessions of faith, and propose a plan. Our own Rev. Leonhard Sudermann was elected to that committee. He championed the teachings of the Word of God on both sides of the Atlantic.

> When you have eaten and are full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord.

Our attitude toward the Bible is no peripheral matter. Already a century ago, the cancer of rationalism began eating out the vitals of Biblical authority in Europe--emptying pews, stifling missions, and nullifying evangelism and service. Maurice Clark, a Methodist layman of Newton, visited his historic family church in Sweden in 1974. Enchanted by the towerbell, the organ, and the cemetery, he attended church on a Lord's Day. Out of a membership of 750, ten gathered to worship! In the heart of Reformation history, huge Germanic churches of 12,000 adherents might have attracted a few hundred on a typical Sunday. Some observer quipped that people make three trips to church in a life-time: once parents carry them in for baptism, once pallbearers carry them in for burial, and once in-between they enter on their own strength as bride and groom. It seems to me that people's erosion of confidence in the Bible eventually kills the church.

Pat Boone, the famous Hollywood celebrity who in recent months has frequently appeared on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show," once spoke to a Christian audience in Los Angeles in my hearing. He related how his girls encountered drugs, tobacco, and pornography in the public schools. As a family, they discussed this and prayed about it. Then he concluded his talk with this gem of truth: "We can't isolate our children from the world, but we can insulate them from within with the Word of God!"

For all Mennonites, a most significant book rolled off the press in 1975, entitled Anabaptists -- Four Centuries Later, by J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder. This is the most extensive study ever made of the life, attitude, and beliefs of five Mennonite denominations. Some 3,600 sample questionnaires furnish the data for this book. This is a kind of spiritual barometer. We will isolate a few findings from the doctrine-chapter as it pertains to our denomination:

1. "Jesus was not only human, but is also the Divine Son of God..." 85% voted Yes.

2. "As a personal devil, Satan is active in the world today." 86% voted Yes.

3. "I believe the Bible is the Divinely inspired and infallible Word of God, the only trustworthy guide for faith and life." 71% voted Yes.

4. "The Christian should take no part in war or any war-promoting activities." 73% voted Yes.

5. "If Christian believers proclaim the lordship of Christ and truly follow him in all of life, they can expect to incur severe criticism and frequent persecution from the larger society." 72% voted Yes.

Generally, the M.B. and E.M.C. groups rated considerably higher in their affirmation of historic Christianity. Some of our preachers and professors are openly pumping critical viewpoints into the bloodstream of the Church. Some lay people are being persuaded. It is, of course, anachronistic to fit the Anabaptists of 400 years ago into a 20th century fundamentalist - modernist debate, because their circumstances were so unlike ours. But this much I say with certitude: our forefathers accepted the Bible at face value--believing it, living it, and preaching it.

Let me share a heart-warming story of one of the greatest conversions of modern times. In the paperback,

Sunrise at Evening, Dr. Ray Charles Jarman gives his life-changing account.

> He was reared in Kansas City. Before he was born, his mother prayed he would be a minister. In school, he lost all faith in the Bible. Educated in places like the University of Chicago, under men such as Shailer Matthews, Jarman early embraced a critical Biblical approach, which saw angels and demons as human inventions, the blood atonement as a slaughterhouse religion, the scriptures as man's struggle after God, and life as a road of inevitable progress.
>
> For fifty years he pastored two large churches in Southern California and had a popular following. When his modernism left him empty, he dabbled in metaphysics, Yoga, and Christian Science. He practiced hypnosis in group counseling, helping women lose weight. Once he paid $500 to have an LSD trip under supervision of a psychologist. He suffered terrible hallucinations.
>
> One layman asked him, "Why don't we believe in the deity of Christ?" He replied, "Oh, there is a divine spark in all of us. Develop it, and you have a Lincoln, Shakespeare, or a Jesus. Jesus is no more God than I." The layman left his church and found Christ in another church.
>
> One day his secretary had a perplexing dream. She found the meaning while listening to a Gospel radio program, and she promptly accepted Christ. She started carrying her Bible, and her boss, Dr. Jarman, just hated Bible-carrying fundamentalists! One day she asked, "If you reject the Virgin birth, the miracles, etc., don't you then have to reject it all?" This shook him. In a layman's house on March 28, 1966, he said he'd like to accept Christ! On his knees and weeping, he saw a vision of Jesus. He was thus dramatically converted at age 70.

We know this was real, for he was a neighboring pas-

tor. This month, ten years later, I heard him share his dramatic story in a church in Wichita. Today he accepts the Bible, the Virgin birth, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it."

We turn now from the Word to the Work.

II. Doing the Work

For 33 years Jesus Christ walked the dusty roads of Palestine. After his resurrection, he dropped the mandate of world evangelism into the lap of his disciples: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18-20a).

Today there is an unhealthy polarization between the "Soul-Saving" bunch and the "Social-Service" bunch. Jesus never knew that distinction. His total life was cut from one piece of cloth. The apostle Peter paid this tribute to his ascended Lord in the house of Cornelius: "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him,...and he ordered us to preach... that through his name, everyone who believes in him has received forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:38,42,43). In a nutshell, Christ's deeds of kindness validated his words of witness.

A striking feature of the early Church was that the ordinary lay people were the evangelists. Evangelism was the prerogative and duty of every church member, and our Anabaptist forebears recovered this insight. Franklin Littell says: "The Anabaptists were among the first to make the Commission binding upon all church members." Kenneth Scott Latourette shows how significant this was. Reformers like Luther and Melanchton believed that the end of the world was imminent, with no time to spread the gospel. Luther held that the Commission was binding only upon the original Apostles and therefore, was long exhausted.

One Dutch Anabaptist has often inspired me--Leonard Bowens. At the age of 36, he was ordained an elder by Menno Simons. Two years later, Mrs. Bowens tried to have her husband released from the pastorate because of the hazards of martyrdom. Menno responded with a 1,300 word letter (dated A.D. 1553), which read in part,

> Most beloved in Christ Jesus...worthy and faithful sister...I am sorry that I cannot give you your way in this matter, for the sorrow and sadness of your flesh pierces my heart as often as I think of it, but the love of God and brethren must be considered first....If you are solicitous for your husband's natural life, then remember...not a hair falls from our heads without the will of our Father....Signed, your Brother in the Lord, Menno Simons.

History records that Leonard Bowens died a natural death at Hoorn, Holland in 1582, and he left behind a list of people he had baptized during his 30 years of ministry --10,251!

> When you reach the promised land, when you eat and are full, then beware--don't forget the Lord.

In the early years of the General Conference in America, interest in missions developed. In 1887, J. B. Baer, fluent in both English and German, was engaged as a full-time mission worker. He worked for both Foreign and Home Missions. Emmaus ministers were involved from the beginning. In 1887, Leonhard Sudermann was elected to the mission committee. Three years later, Pastor Gustav Harder was elected to the Board of Foreign Missions. In the G.C. Mennonite Pioneers, we read:

> Gustav's interest in the cause of missions was one of the passions of his life. This is evident in his sermons, his conversation, and his handling of Mission Board work. He was always delighted to tell about the wonderful work of God which the missionaries were doing. In this connection, he also did a great deal of trav-

eling, visiting churches, and attending Mission Board meetings.

The advancement in communications and travel for the spread of the gospel in one century is astounding. In 1860, the year the General Conference was organized in Iowa, the first run of the Pony Express carried mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in ten days. In 1876, the year our forefathers started breaking sod in Kansas, Alexander Graham Bell patented a new device to transmit human voices over a wire. Today our missionaries fly to the mission field in 747 Jumbo Jets, 650 miles an hour, with 400 other passengers. Starting this week, they can fly the supersonic Concorde to London at speeds up to 1400 miles an hour. Telephones, radios, televisions---never has man had more tools to do his work for Christ.

Today our affluence needs to be harnessed for Christ. The hero of Christ's story in Luke 10 was the good Samaritan, who gave both time and money. He stayed up all night with the victim and prepaid his medical costs in the morning. Today we still need a kind of service-oriented Christianity in overalls.

In Voluntary Service, we share Christmas bundles in Guatemala.

In Relief Service, we share food in Bangladesh.

In Medical Service, we dispense medicines in Taiwan.

In Disaster Service, we clear tornado debris in Kansas.

In Every-Day Service, we share a cake, or harvest a sick man's crop.

Recently, Edgar Stoesz, Director of our MCC World Hunger programs, warned us against the malady of "compassion fatigue."

> When you have eaten and are full, then beware, lest you forget the Lord.

At the great gathering of the world's evangelicals at Lousanne, Switzerland, in 1974, this statement was adopted: "...All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions, and disturbed by the injustices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances, accept our duty to develop a simple lifestyle in order to con-

tribute more generously to both relief and evangelism." Milo Kaufman, in his new book, Stewards of God, correctly asserts that tithes and offerings are God's antidote to covetousness.

When I ponder the mission records of Mennonites in general in America, and the Emmaus Mennonite Church in particular, I am awe-struck. It is a miracle of God! We have been brought to these shores for a purpose! Mennonites in Europe during the past century have sent a mere trickle of workers to mission fields, while Mennonites in America have sent a flood of workers. In the mid-50's when the Mennonite Encyclopedia was written, Mennonite Mission Societies from America had 600 workers on foreign soil, not to mention the hundreds of Mennonites serving with interdenominational mission works, like SIM, TEAM and GMU. Your church alone has given thousands of dollars and scores of young people for world evangelism. The spiritual components of America--the revival spirit, the Bible Institute movement, the prayers of saints and local concerned leadership--all have played a part, no doubt, in calling youth to commitment.

This, then is the challenge: "When you have eaten and are full, beware, lest you forget the Lord." There is a Word to heed and a Work to do as we enter the second century!

In conclusion--a year ago, I attended an evangelism workshop. Before I left home, a nurse from Bethel Hospital phoned: "A certain alcoholic is admitted. He drank a pint of paint thinner; can you come sit with him?" I said, "No, my time is committed, and I don't know whom to call on the spur of the moment." Later I thought--that is symbolic of life; we are always so busy with workshops on how to do the work of God, while out there the work is waiting! When all is said and done, there is always more said than done.

A century ago, Mennonite folk were planted on these prairies of Kansas, destined by God to share a harvest of food and faith with a hungry world. In America's heartland, their Russian Turkey Wheat was to create a breadbasket for the world. In America's liberties, Mennonites' simple faith was to blossom into a world-wide ministry of missions and relief, peace and service, mutual aid and disaster care. Mennonite pioneers of 1876 settled in Butler County, Kansas. Their blood surges through our

veins. Before they were laid to rest in our cemeteries, they passed on to us the Baton of Faith. Let us renew our grip on the word and the work, and run the race with renewed dedication.

Note the macrame behind the choir. It was made by Richard Toevs for the Centennial.

Alfred Busenitz brought his horses and wagon and gave the children rides. The colt follows along willingly even though he is tied to his mother.

ELDERS OF THE EMMAUS MENNONITE CHURCH

LEONHARD SUDERMANN

Leonhard Sudermann, the first elder of the Emmaus Mennonite Church, was born April 21, 1821, in Goldschar, near Marienburg, West Prussia, Germany, to Abraham and Anna von Riesen Sudermann. He was married on October 23, 1842, to Marie Sudermann.

Sudermann was one of a group of 12 delegates who came to America in 1873 to seek for places on which to settle. In the fall of 1876, he with his family came to the United States and stayed in Summerfield, Illinois, before making a decision where they wanted to settle. He, with his brother Abraham and others, made a trip to Nebraska and Kansas, and decided to buy in the new settlement in Butler County, Kansas. He bought a tract of land, NE¼ of Section 9, in Milton Township and moved his family from Summerfield in April, 1877.

In his writings he relates that the family was well taken care of by those who had come earlier to the settlement. They also hauled the material for his new home.

He took charge of this group of Mennonites who had settled in this section of Kansas, and in May, 1877, the Emmaus Mennonite Church was organized. He also had charge of the Mennonite group in Newton, Kansas, until 1886.

January 26, 1900, was a very solemn day for the congregation. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the beloved Elder Sudermann died. He was known to many and the funeral, which took place on January 31, was largely attended. At the home, Brother John P. Andres and Elder D. Gerber spoke. After the services at the home, the group followed the casket to the church which was only a short distance. Eight fellow ministers had a part in the services at the church and cemetery.

So a tenure of 23 years of serving the Emmaus congregation came to a close. He attained the age of 78 years, 9 months and 5 days. His wife lived until November 8, 1915; her life span was 94 years, 9 months and 4 days.

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EDUARD CLAASSEN

Eduard Claassen, Sr., was born September 28, 1853, in Heubuden, West Prussia, Germany, to Dietrich and Marie Conradt Claassen. On May 23, 1876, he was married to Justine von Riesen; and so they started their married life with an ocean voyage to a new country and to establish a home on the Kansas prairies. As far as is known, their first home was on the NE¼ of Section 29 in Milton Township, Butler County.

Eduard Claassen was elected to the ministry of the Emmaus Mennonite Church on January 14, 1884. After the death of Elder Sudermann, an election was held on March 18, 1900, and Claassen was elected to the eldership of the congregation. His ordination took place on September

30, 1900, with Rev. Christian Krehbiel ministering at the services. Claassen's tenure was short, as he resigned on

February 8, 1902, having served only 16 months. His death occurred on December 8, 1918.

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GUSTAV HARDER

Gustav Harder was born March 19, 1856, in Gurken, Heubuden, West Prussia, Germany, to Bernhard and Agatha Regier Harder. He was 20 years old when he came to America with the original group in 1876. In 1880, he

returned to Germany and, on May 25, married Helene Kroeker. They returned with a group of Mennonites on the ship "Main," arriving in New York on June 18, 1880, and then proceeded to Peabody, Kansas. Their home was on the SW¼ of Section 16, Milton Township, Butler County.

Brother Harder was elected to the ministry on January 14, 1884. Upon the resignation of Elder Eduard Claassen, the congregation elected Brother Harder to

serve as elder; and on May 25, 1902, he was ordained to this office by Rev. Christian Krehbiel. He served the congregation faithfully for 18 years as minister and then 21 years as elder. He also was active for the cause of God's kingdom by serving on the General Conference Foreign Mission Board and was treasurer of that board for a number of years.

After a lengthy illness, he died on June 16, 1923, attaining the age of 67 years.

* * * * * * *

BERNHARD W. HARDER

Bernhard W. Harder, affectionately known as "B. W.," was born July 30, 1878, to Johannes and Marie Regier Harder. He was the first grandchild of the Bernhard Harder and Gerhard Regier families, as well as the first child born in the new Mennonite settlement. He married Minna Wiebe on June 7, 1900.

He was elected to the ministry of the Emmaus Mennonite Church on July 20, 1902. He attended the local schools and later taught in the parochial schools of the church community. His thirst for knowledge led him to Bethel Academy in Newton, Kansas, and the Emporia State College at Emporia, Kansas, to prepare himself for the teaching ministry. His father did not encourage all of this education but did not hinder him. His grandfather took a different view of all of this, saying, "If you would give your son a good whipping, he would forget these

ideas of higher education." In order to minister more effectively, he felt the need of seminary training; so in 1910, he, with his family went to Dayton, Ohio, where he attended the Reformed Seminary for eight months and then to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, for four months. Later he took a refresher course at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California.

Upon the death of Elder Gustav Harder, the congregation elected Brother "B. W." to the office of elder on October 7, 1923. He was ordained to this office on January 7, 1924, by Rev. P. H. Richert of Goessel, Kansas. "B. W." retired from the ministry in January, 1939, serving 22 years as minister and 15 years as elder.

His death occurred August 12, 1970, attaining the age of 93 years. His wife's death had occurred exactly 19 years earlier - August 12, 1951.

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JOHN C. KAUFMAN

After B. W. Harder's retirement, the congregation on January 13, 1939, by resolution decided to adopt the one minister system. On March 26 of that year, the congregation extended a call to John C. Kaufman, who was serving the Hopefield Mennonite Church near Moundridge, Kansas. He was the first elder to serve the church who had not been a member of the congregation prior to his election. It was mutually agreed to have the installation services on April 21, but due to Sister Kaufman's illness and surgery, the installation was indefinitely postponed. On May 1, 1939, Brother Kaufman began his services without a formal installation.

Brother Kaufman kept a very good set of records. These records show that he performed 93 baptisms and 23 marriages within the church. He was instrumental in compiling the first year book of the church, which was for the year of 1940. He held the first Child Consecration service in the history of the church on May 19, 1940.

His term of office ended in December, 1947. His last years were spent in his home community, Freeman, South Dakota, where he died on July 27, 1956.

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WALTER H. DYCK

For a time after John C. Kaufman ended his ministry, we had ministers who were willing to serve us on Sundays and special occasions. The congregation extended a call to Brother Walter H. Dyck in August, 1948. Since Brother Dyck was executive secretary of the General Conference, he served on a temporary basis until February 27, 1949, when he was ordained as elder of our church.

1949 was a trying year for the Dycks, as Mrs. Dyck died of a rare blood disease on August 12, leaving Brother Dyck and three children. His sister, Dorothea Dyck, helped him much at this time. The family did not take up residence in the church community but lived in Newton, Kansas. On August 14, 1950, Brother Dyck married Martha Harder Suderman. Martha was no stranger to us, as she had grown up in our community and was a member until she transferred to the First Mennonite Church in Newton upon her marriage to Paul Suderman. He died in 1937.

Also during 1950, the parsonage was built, and Rev. and Mrs. Dyck with his three children and her two children were the first occupants.

In 1952, they were given a leave of absence to attend the Mennonite World Conference in Basel, Switzerland. Since the General Conference Mission Board called Rev. and Mrs. Dyck into a new field of service in South America, it became necessary for him to resign before his term of service was over. His resignation took effect on October 31, 1954.

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L. R. AMSTUTZ

In December, 1954, a call was extended to L. R. Amstutz, who was serving the First Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Brother Amstutz began his services with us in July, 1955.

During his term of service, Brother and Sister Amstutz visited the mission field in Japan and in Taiwan and made a tour of the Holy Land. Beside the duties as our minister, he served on the Evangelism Committee of the Western District Conference and on the boards of

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Berean Academy, Elbing, Kansas, and Grace College of the Bible, Omaha, Nebraska. When the nursing home, "Wheat State Manor," was built in Whitewater, Kansas, he was active on the ministerial committee that had been formed to give spiritual help to the residents of the home.

Having accepted a call from the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Gridley, Illinois, Pastor Amstutz tendered his resignation to the congregation in September, 1975, and on January 11, 1976, gave his last sermon to the congregation. He served the church for 20½ years.

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ALVIN D. KLEINSASSER

Accepting the call the church extended him, Alvin D. Kleinsasser came to us in September, 1976. He had been serving the Zion Mennonite Church in Donnelson, Iowa, before he accepted our call.

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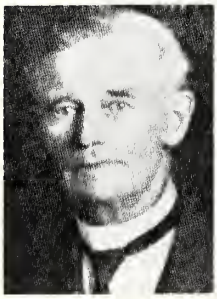
OTHER MINISTERS WHO SERVED THE CHURCH

ABRAHAM SUDERMAN

Abraham Sudermann, a brother of our first elder, Leonhard Sudermann, had served in the Heubuden Church in West Prussia, and served in our church from the time of its organization until 1880, when he moved to Newton, Kansas.

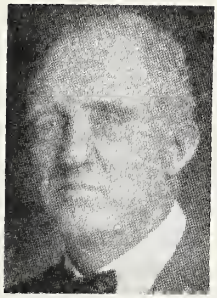
PETER DYCK

Peter Dyck, one of the original group to come in 1876, had also been a minister in the Heubuden Church in West Prussia and served the congregation until 1883, when he joined with a group and formed the Zion Mennonite Church at Elbing, Kansas.



JOHN P. ANDRES

On Easter Monday, April 3, 1893, after the church services, an election for a minister was held. Before the election, Elder Sudermann gave a short talk on the importance of this act. Result of the election was that John P. Andres was elected. On May 7, 1893, he was ordained and served until September 29, 1905. He then joined the Zion Mennonite Church at Elbing, Kansas, and served there as minister for many years.



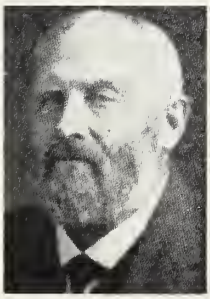
HENRY M. WIEBE

July 20, 1902, an election for ministers was held and the result of this election was that Henry M. Wiebe and B. W. Harder were elected. These two were ordained into the ministry on August 31, 1902. Brother Wiebe served until September 29, 1905.

HENRY THIESSEN

April 20, 1908, Henry Thiessen was elected to the ministry and ordained July 9, 1911. During this time he was getting more education in Hillsboro, Kansas, and the church paid him $5.00 a trip to come serve the church at intervals. While teaching school in Oklahoma, the congregation felt he should devote more time to the ministry of the church and asked him to return to the church community. He also served as teacher in the north parochial school.

On February 9, 1939, he terminated his services with the church. He, with his family, moved to a farm in the vicinity of Independence, Kansas, and for a time served the Mennonite Church at Fredonia, Kansas.



BERNHARD WIEBE

Upon his return to the Emmaus community in 1910, Bernhard Wiebe, who had served the Bethel Mennonite Church at Hydro, Oklahoma, since 1902, was elected to the ministry of the Emmaus Church. He was well-liked by the congregation because of his quiet Christian conduct and served until his death on July 22, 1921.

INTERIM MINISTERS

On December 31, 1948, the church board reported that for the first time in the seventy years since its organization, the church was without a regular minister. The church board was responsible for having a servant of God in the pulpit to preach the Word of God every Sunday until an interim minister was secured.

HENRY POETTCKER, a student at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, served as interim minister for two months in 1949 and conducted the installation service on March 1, 1949, for Walter H. Dyck.

HENRY J. DYCK, of Elbing, Kansas, a retired minister and well known in our congregation, served from November, 1954, to July, 1955.

LUBIN JANTZEN, a missionary to India and on an extended furlough, served from January to September, 1976.

CHURCH SERVICES

In a report to the General Conference in 1890, sent in by the elder, he records that church services were held every Sunday and Church holiday, as well as Thanksgiving Day, as proclaimed by the President of the United States. The church holidays observed were Good Friday, Ascension Day and Christmas, as well as New Year's Day. On the Mondays after Easter and Pentecost Sundays, services were also held, as well as the two days after Christmas. In 1932, these Monday observances were discontinued, and only one day after Christmas is observed. One year Sunday School classes were held on these holidays, but that did not prove satisfactory.

COMMUNION SERVICES

It is the custom in our congregation to observe three Communion services during the year. In the beginning, one of these was observed on Epiphany Sunday (a church festival commemorating the coming of the Magi to Jesus at Jerusalem). To more evenly divide the services throughout the year, it was decided in 1879, to change this service to the first Sunday in Lent. We still observe this custom. The second service is held the second Sunday after the baptismal service. The third was held sometime in October and at the present time this one is observed on the first Sunday in October to be in harmony with World Wide Communion Sunday.

In the fall of 1880 when Gerhard Claassen was planning a trip to West Prussia, he was asked to buy six Communion cups. These six Communion cups served the congregation for 71 years. In 1951, the individual Communion service was purchased. The Elder's wife baked the Communion bread, as the records show that after Leonhard Sudermann's death, the church for several years gave Mrs. Sudermann a remuneration for this service.

BAPTISM

After the worship service on July 7, 1878, at a meeting of the brethren, it was decided that the candi-

dates for baptism would inform the Elder of their desire to receive baptism, instead as had been the custom in West Prussia, where they were presented by two brethren. That same Sunday afternoon, July 7, 1878, catechetical instruction was begun under the leadership of the elder, Leonhard Sudermann. Then on October 13, 1878, in the newly-built church, the first baptismal service was observed. The following names are recorded as the first class to be baptized: Henry Riesen, Henry Penner, Gustav Claassen, Anna Regier, Margaretha Regier, Anna Claassen, Marie Spenst, and Elise Kroeker. Most generally the rite of baptism was performed on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday, but on April 4, 1916, this was changed to Pentecost Sunday and this custom has been kept with a few exceptions. On June 4, 1916, the first Baptismal service was held on Pentecost Sunday and the following were baptized: Carl Claassen, Elise Regier, Justine Wiebe and Helen Epp.

CHURCH COUNCIL

As early as 1877, mention is made of a church council. The elder, Leonhard Sudermann and the two ministers, Abraham Sudermann and Peter Dyck and deacon Dietrich Claassen made up this council. The two ministers served until 1880 and 1883, respectively. Dietrich Claassen probably served until his death on March 27, 1893. Throughout the years the ministers with the elder made up the church council. In April, 1916, it was decided that a committee of three brethren be elected to serve with the ministers. Serving on this committee until the annual meeting in January, 1917, were John H. Claassen, John Harder, Sr., and Abraham Dieck. At the annual meeting in 1917, the first "Board of Deacons" was elected. John H. Claassen was elected to serve three years, John Harder, Sr., two years and John Regier for one year. This committee is also known as the "Church Board."

BUSINESS MEETINGS

On March 27, 1878, this motto was written for the business meetings: I Peter 5:5, "All of you be subject

one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

All business meetings are opened with a congregational hymn, and Scripture reading and prayer by the Elder. The Elder presided at all meetings. Elder Sudermann kept the first records of the meetings until his death. Then the ministers alternately served as secretary. The meetings were conducted in this manner until 1939, when the chairman was elected from the laity, and the secretary of the Board of Deacons served as secretary. The business meetings from the beginning of the church organization were held sometime during the first two weeks of January. In 1923 when a church constitution was written, the church year was changed to begin December 1 and end November 30. Now the meetings are held between Christmas and New Year. Minutes of all meetings were recorded in the German language until 1940, when the Board of Deacons recommended that since our records are not only for today but for future years, the records should also be kept in the English language. The records were kept in both languages until 1947, when the German record was discontinued.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In a report to the General Conference in 1891, Elder Sudermann reported the following: "The Sunday School takes place on Sunday afternoon under the leadership of the Elder in a Catechetical instruction. Twenty to thirty pupils are given the opportunity to learn of the importance of the truths the Bible teaches from the questions in the Catechism." From the beginning this was a class for Catechetical instruction. In 1901, the first mention is made of a Sunday School. Two classes were to be formed and the Elder was to teach the older group and B. W. Harder to teach the younger group. Upon the resignation of Elder Eduard Claassen in 1902, Brother B. W. Harder was asked to lead the Sunday School. The next year the elder and one of the ministers taught the classes.

In 1904 at the annual meeting, it was decided to buy songbooks for the Sunday School and that classes be held on Sunday forenoon between the hour of 9 and 10 o'clock. The time was later changed to 9:30 to 10:30. The organization of the Sunday School was a very important step for the congregation, and a special meeting was held in which the following resolutions were passed: 1. The Sunday School is to be under the jurisdiction of the church; 2. A committee of three to appoint the teachers; 3. The committee to be composed of the elder, a standing member, and the superintendent and the assistant superintendent. The first superintendent was B. W. Harder and the assistant was H. M. Wiebe.

Quarterlies published by the Conference were used as lesson material. The children used a German Bible story book. After more English was used, the Egermeier's Bible Story Book was used in the children's classes and the English quarterlies were used in the adult classes. So through the years the Sunday School has been an important part of the church in teaching Bible truths.

When the third church was built in 1928, it afforded more room for classes. In 1956, the graded series of lesson material was introduced and this created a need for more class rooms. The Sunday School committee presented the need to the church, and plans were made to add onto the existing church building. Twelve class rooms and two fellowship rooms that can be divided into three rooms each greatly relieved the crowded conditions. The addition was dedicated March 11, 1962.

On January 6, 1914, a resolution was passed, that as a congregation we have no objections if the Sunday School wants to give a Christmas program. This custom has been kept through the years. Treats of candy, nuts and an orange are given to the children. A tree has also been decorated each year with ornaments and candles. These candles were lit by two men, and then they stood by with buckets of water in case of fire. When electricity was installed, electric lights were used on the tree.

Annually a picnic is held in the summer. In earlier years, the sites of the picnic were in a grove of trees south of the church on the Gerhard Claassen farm; at the John Kopper place in a grove of walnut trees and along the creek on the Jacob Harder farm. Now the Peabody park is used for the annual picnic. Chairs and tables are

hauled to the site of the picnic, and in the early years the reed organ was also transported to the picnic site.

The Sunday School committee is responsible for the Sunday School, the Daily Vacation Bible School, Junior Christian Endeavor and the Mid-Week children's classes. In earlier years the Bible School was held in two different locations, the south part and the north part of the church community. Now it is centrally held in the church building. At the close of Daily Vacation Bible School, a program is given and the picnic follows.

Seeing the needs of children not as fortunate as our children, the committee asked the children to bring their offerings on Thanksgiving Day for this cause. The first offerings were sent to Canada. More recently the missionaries and church workers are the recipients of these gifts, to be used as special projects. One Thanksgiving Day, a girl brought her gift in a purse and as she came to the offering basket, she opened her purse, turned it upside down and "gave all she had."

The Sunday School committee has also been responsible for the collection of Christmas bundles to be distributed among needy children in different parts of the world. These bundles consisted of outer wear, soap and a toy wrapped in a bath towel. $1.00 was attached to each bundle and at the MCC Center a Bible in the appropriate language was placed in these bundles.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY

January 24, 1909, the church gave the young people permission to organize a Christian Endeavor Society. Miss Elizabeth Baumgartner, of Halstead, Kansas, who was teaching in the "Hunter" school and staying with the Gerhard Regier family, was instrumental in starting the "C.E." The young people of the Regier family were interested in this, as one of them attended the Swiss Church C.E., and so they became the first members of this organization. A constitution was written and approved by the congregation. The programs consisted of topics assigned to the members by the program committee. Music also was a part of the programs. Sunday afternoon was the time for the programs; and in 1919, the congregation gave the C.E. permission to hold their meetings in the evenings

during the summer months. Later the meetings were and still are held in the evening on the first Sunday of the month. Originally a membership list was kept, but in later years this was discontinued.

In 1935, under the leadership of the Sunday School committee, a Junior Christian Endeavor was organized. Membership was from 9 years through the 17th birthday, when they joined the Senior C. E. In 1955, this was changed to 3rd grade through 8th grade, and at that time the Youth Fellowship was organized. Young people become a part of the Youth Fellowship when entering the 9th grade. These two groups also meet on the first Sunday of the month.

Each year all of the C. E.'s are involved in a Missionary Conference. Special speakers are a part of the programs. These meetings are held in July or August and at the conclusion the Youth Fellowship has a Retreat at some camp ground.

CHURCH LIBRARY

On January 27, 1903, our church library had its beginning, for a resolution was made that day to have an offering to begin a youth library. The ministers and the brethren John Regier and H. H. Wiebe were authorized to purchase books for this library.

An offering is held each year for this cause. B. W. Harder was the treasurer and from year to year, he reported on the finances of this committee, but otherwise no mention is made of who had charge of the library until 1910 when a librarian was elected.

The library committee was to set up its own regulations. More and more books were purchased each year, and in 1915 a larger book case had to be purchased. Readers were not allowed to remove books from the shelves; the librarians handed them the books. Gustav Dyck, one of the librarians in 1916, reported that 1,044 books were checked out that year. Then in 1918, Albert Claassen's report stated that 975 books had been checked out.

At present, 1978, our library has about 2,200 books on the shelves.

MUSIC MINISTRY

The first hymnbook used by the congregation was entitled, "Song Book for Mennonite Congregations in Church and Home." There was no musical score, but each hymn had the name of a melody by which it was sung. The book contained 700 hymns and was divided in sections much as our present hymn books. The hymn book, "Gesangbuch mit Noten," was purchased to be used in the Sunday School, but later was used for church services when the reed organ was purchased. The old hymn books were sold for a small fee. Another German hymnal was secured for the Sunday School. The Service Hymnal and the Mennonite Hymnary are our present song books.

As far as is known, John Harder, Sr. was the first song leader. It was his duty to select the hymns for the worship services. Later his son, John Harder, Jr., also was song leader. Whether these two were elected or appointed is not known, but on July 23, 1905, an election was held and Ed Claassen and Peter Thiessen were elected to also serve as song leaders. These four men served as song leaders until December, 1928, when they resigned. Since 1943, we again elect a song leader each year.

On November 8, 1908, a committee of three men, Christian Thierstein, Peter Thiessen and John Harder, Jr., were appointed to purchase an organ. A free will offering was taken to cover the expenses of the organ. No mention is made of the cost of the organ, but there was a balance of $42.88. The first organists for the worship services were Christian Thierstein, Peter Thiessen and J. G. Regier. The organists for the Sunday School were Marie Bergmann, Marie R. Wiebe (Mrs. Jacob Thiessen) and Margaretha Penner (Mrs. J. E. Regier). The piano was purchased in 1926 and the electric organ in 1962.

In 1914, the congregation encouraged the youth of the church to have choir practice. The time for these practices would be announced on Sunday morning. In 1961, a music committee of three was elected. They are in charge of securing musical numbers for the worship services and to be an overall consultant for the various departments of church music. They also appoint the organists and pianists. In former years the two organists and two pianists were elected for a term of one year at the annual meeting.

At one time the Western District Conference sponsored a "Song Festival" in which our choir also participated. One year we were hosts for this festival and a large tent was set up to accommodate the large crowd that was expected.

WOMEN'S MISSION SOCIETY

The exact date of the organization of the "Näh Stunde" (Sewing Hour) is not known; but sometime in the 1890's, Mrs. Peter Epp was instrumental in organizing a group of women, among these were Mrs. Abraham Esau, Mrs. John D. Penner, Mrs. John F. Harder and the Misses Marie Bergman, Marie Thierstein (Mrs. Herman Klaassen) and Anna Janzen (Mrs. J. L. Regier, Elbing, Kansas). The organization was also known as the "Näh Verein" (Sewing Society) and later the Women's Mission Society.

Meetings were held in the home about twice a month. The hostess for the next meeting would take the supplies and the hand cranked portable sewing machine with her to be in readiness for the next meeting. After the third church was built, the meetings were held in the basement of the church. Here storage place was available for the supplies. The women met every three weeks for a while and then it was changed to once a month. Treadle machines were used in the 1930's and after electricity was installed, electric portable machines were purchased. No meetings are held in the months of June, July and August.

The first sewing done by the women was for the Mission field in Oklahoma, where the General Conference had started a work among the Indians. Later the mission fields in Arizona and Montana were included in receiving articles. These were sent direct to the missionaries. Articles for India were sent to a central point in California and from there forwarded to India. Dried fruit purchased in California was also sent to India.

The first record of offerings was small, but the expenses were not large either. A sample of purchases made about 1913 included these items: Men's shirts at 35 to 45 cents, boy's trousers for 40 cents, buttons at 5 cents a dozen and a spool of thread for 5 cents.

The Western District Women's Organization sends each society an assignment to be made or purchased for the

different mission fields. If articles were to be sewn, a cutting committee prepared these articles; later the cut-out garment could be purchased from the clothing center in Kalona, Iowa, and still later from the MCC headquarters in Newton, Kansas.

Much relief sewing and knitting was also done for the Red Cross. After a request from MCC for 50,000 blankets, our women sent worn out woolen clothes to a mill to be made into batts for comforters. A total of 38 comforters were made and 80 blankets were purchased through the MCC.

The Sewing Society started the relief canning project in our church. During World War II, when the young men were in Civilian Public Service camps, the women canned of their garden surplus and also purchased canned goods. We also helped supply linens for the camps. We did not forget the boys and girls in voluntary service. At Christmas time, boxes of goodies were sent to them.

On December 12, 1945, at the John Epp, Jr. farm the first meat canning for relief was done. Much equipment had to be brought together for this project. During December, 1945, and January and February, 1946, canning was done at five farms. Records show that 54 hogs, 11 beeves and 4 lambs were processed. This amounted to 4,050 lbs. of cured meat, 4,900 cans of meat, 3,400 lbs. of lard, 725 lbs. of tallow, and 1,050 lbs. cracklings. Small pressure canners were used for this, and so it took several days at each home to get all of the meat processed.

RELIEF COMMITTEE

The Relief Committee came into being when the women of the Sewing Society started the canning project for the young men in the Civilian Public Service camps and canning meat for relief.

On July 14, 1946, the men endorsed the efforts of the women and asked them to elect a committee to help them. Carl Claassen, C. B. Thierstein and John Epp, Jr. were the first committee. Now the committee is elected at the annual meeting.

After several years the Mennonite Central Committee made a portable canner available, and all of the meat was

canned in this fashion. With this arrangement, it took only two days to can the large amount of meat. The animals were slaughtered at the lockers in Potwin and Whitewater, then brought to the farm where the portable canner had been set up. This type of canning was done until the government inspected the canning operations. We then banded together with the area Mennonite churches and did the relief canning. Now all of the canning is done at the MCC Center in North Newton, Kansas.

The Relief Committee has helped with wheat donations through the organization called Christian Rural Overseas Program (C.R.O.P.). When refugees from Europe were sent to South America, we sent them tools, harness and horse drawn implements. Elma Esau was the director of one of the ship load of refugees that went to South America, and we had a part in paying for the passage. We have also helped displaced families until they were self-supporting. These families lived in our community.

Many times through the years the men and women have helped after tornado, flood and fire disasters. Although the committee was not formed until after the tornado of 1941, much help was given in cleaning up the destroyed homes of our members and neighbors. Homes of our members that were affected by the tornado were Otto and Marie Penner, C. B. Thierstein, John Epp, Jr., John Thiessen, A. H. Klaassen, Jacob Thiessen, Gus H. Regier, Jr., and Alfred Regier. Marie Penner and the six-months-old son of the C. B. Thiersteins were killed at that time. Susan Thiessen has been in a wheel chair since that night of the tornado.

In 1958, when the home of the Albert Dycks was destroyed by fire and three of their children perished, the church helped with securing a new home for them.

WILLING WORKERS

This organization was started in 1948 mainly through the forward look of Mrs. W. E. Regier for a group of younger women of our church to become interested in the work of Women in Missions, and was known by the name of "Emmaus Missionary Fellowship." About a dozen women met in the various homes monthly and later, with some apprehension that it might detract from the close-knit feeling,

started to meet in the church basement. The name was changed to "Willing Workers"; and now, with about 40 members, they meet in the evening of the first Thursday of each month with a program, prayer service and work. One meeting during the year is an all-day meeting.

Beginning with quilt block cutting for the Indian Mission stations and a few special projects, the area of work soon changed to a large variety of involvements, such as material and financial aid to Mennonite Central Committee, projects for Western District Conference Women's Missionary organization, the Wichita Rescue Mission, the Missionary Home in Brainerd and the Wheat State Manor in Whitewater. Also quilt-making and quilting for benefits, as well as quilting for members are some of their projects.

A committee supervises the grade and high school girls in various projects during the summer months. A flower committee is responsible for flowers for special occasions and Sunday morning worship services.

The work of the food committee and the kitchen committee includes serving at weddings, anniversaries and farm sales when asked. They also take care of the various banquets and Fesper food preparations, buying a variety of kitchen equipment and keeping the kitchen in order.

An annual fall banquet is a high point among the members, when the husbands as well as other guests are invited for an evening of food, a program and fellowship. For an afternoon of fellowship the "Over Seventy" group of the church are invited to the Christmas Fesper, which is also an annual event.

CHURCH BUILDINGS

The first building used as a worship place was the granary on the Bernhard Harder farm, the SE¼ of Section 17, Milton Township. This also served as the family home of the Harder family. Later private homes and district school houses were used. On March 27, 1878, the brethren met to fully decide on the building of a meeting house.

As had already been decided, the building was to be in the northeast corner of the NE¼ of section 9, Milton Township. The size of the building to be 28 feet wide, 50 feet long and 14 feet high. Foundation two feet above

the ground and 15 inches wide. Windows were a specific size, which is not readily translated from the German. The building committee was Leonhard Sudermann and Gerhard Regier, Sr. On May 21, 1878, further specifications were made as to how many windows and doors. A women's cloak room was in the southeast corner of the church and the minister's room in the northeast. The seating capacity of the first church was 142. A well was dug and the necessary scaffolding was built, as the water was pulled up with a rope and bucket. The pews and the pulpit were built by the men of the congregation. The church was dedicated on September 29, 1878.

An interesting sidelight about the pews of all three churches: New pews were purchased for each of the three churches, but the old ones were kept and used in the next church building. The pews of the first church were used in the balcony of the second church and then in the basement of the third church. The new pews for the second church are used in the balcony of the third or present church.

In 1881, a 12 feet by 14 feet building, called the coat house, was built, so the men had a place to hang their coats.

On January 8, 1908, at the annual meeting a list was to be compiled for the decision of whether to build onto the existing building for about $1,500.00 or to build new for $4,500.00. On January 27, 1908, it was decided to build a new building. The building committee of five men, John Harder, Sr., John H. Claassen, H. H. Wiebe, John Regier and Gerhard Regier, were to present plans after they had inspected other churches.

Bids for the old church building were to be made by March 1, 1908. On March 3, 1908, the offer of $301.00 for the old building made by John Harder, Jr. was accepted as well as the offer of $31.00 made by John D. Wiebe for the foundation.

The Neiman family made a donation of $185.00 for the new church building which the congregation accepted.

One acre of land from Mrs. Leonhard Sudermann was also accepted, but if more land was needed that was to be acquired by purchase.

The first church was west of the driveway that presently leads to the Herman Toevs farm, and after the building was removed, this was to be the east line of the

present cemetery. The second church was east of the driveway on the site selected by the building committee. The size of the second church was 38 feet wide and 60 feet long. Other specifications were a steep roof, a steeple, a slanting floor and two sets of steps to the balcony. The basement was to be just large enough for the furnace and the coal. The carpenter, who came from Peabody, used the coat house as living quarters during the week.

The dedication of the second church took place on December 20, 1908, and an invitation was inserted in "Der Bundesbote" for the public to come help us celebrate this festive occasion. A food committee of seven men made arrangements for the noon meal for the dedication which was served in the old church.

Twenty years had elapsed since the first church became too small for the growing congregation, and now in another twenty years the second church also became too small. In the beginning of 1928, plans were made to build the third church. Again there was a discussion of whether to add onto the existing building or to build new. If a new one was built, the old one was to be advertised for sale, with the stipulation that it could be used until the new one was finished. After Brother John Harder, Sr. offered a barn to be used for church services, the old church was torn down and incorporated into the new building. The trustees arranged the hay mow of the barn into a suitable worship place. Steps were built from the outside to the hay mow. The pulpit, pews, organ and library were all moved into the barn. A piano had been purchased in 1926, and the offer of Christian Thierstein to keep it in his home was accepted. Before the church was completed, and with winter setting in, arrangements were made to hold services in the basement of the church. The dedication of the third church took place on January 20, 1929. The cost of the building was $27,136.38.

In the winter of 1961-62, the Sunday School addition was built. Read about this under the heading of Sunday School. In January 1973, the front of the sanctuary was completely rebuilt, and carpeting was laid in the aisles and in the halls. The main part of the basement was also renovated.

CHURCH HEATING AND LIGHTING

Our first church was heated with a coal stove. The stove was taken down in the spring and again replaced in the fall. One year the records show that John F. Harder was authorized to do this for $3.00. The janitor was paid $40.00 annually for heating and cleaning the church building. Coal for the stove was hauled by the person who would do it for the least amount of money. One year, Eduard Claassen offered to haul coal from Newton or Peabody for $1.50 a half ton. Lighting in the first church was with kerosene lamps which hung from the ceiling and were pulled down to be lighted.

The second church was heated with a furnace which was in the basement. But the basement was only large enough for the furnace and the coal. The janitor's salary was now $100.00 annually, which was for heating and cleaning the church and hauling the coal. Lighting in this church was with gasoline lamps.

The third church was equipped with two blast furnaces, stoked with coal and later converted to propane gas. A motor with storage batteries supplied the electricity for the third church. When an evening meeting was held, the motor had to run continuously to provide the light. In 1929, a year after the church was built, consideration was given to connect to the Kansas Gas and Electric Company line which runs by the church. But it was not until 1941 that we availed ourselves of the electricity from the high line. It was to be tried for one year; but when the year was over, it was decided to continue to use the electric current from the high line. Also in 1929 a telephone was installed, but after a year it was removed. Several years later upon the wish of W. E. Regier, a physician in our congregation, the telephone was again installed, with Dr. Regier paying for one-half of the cost. Later the church assumed the full cost of the telephone bill.

In 1952, a complete public address system including hearing aids was installed. In 1961, when the Sunday School addition was built, a water system was installed. The kitchen was remodeled and two rest rooms were added.

A Board of Trustees consisting of five men are responsible for the church building, the grounds and the cemetery. These are elected for a term of five years.

The first Board of Trustees was the building committee of the second church. They were elected as follows: John H. Claassen for 5 years, John Regier for 4 years, H. H. Wiebe, 3 years, John Harder, Sr. 2 years and Gerhard Regier for 1 year.

An interesting item taken from the records: In 1890, when John Harder, Sr. was treasurer of the church, he was authorized to purchase a new clock for the local assembly, since the old clock was defective and was of no use anymore. The old one was sold at auction for 95 cents.

PARSONAGE

Until 1939, our ministers had been elected from the laity, and they had their own dwelling; but since we went to the "One Minister" plan and the minister was from another community, it was decided to provide housing for our pastors. John C. Kaufman, the first pastor to come from another community lived in Brainerd. In 1948, a house was purchased in Whitewater which was to serve as a parsonage; but before it was used as such, the congregation decided to build a parsonage near the church; so it was sold in 1950.

Four proposed sites were considered for the location of the parsonage. The final decision was the site which the J. C. Toevs family gave and the parsonage was built during the summer of 1950. Dedication of the home took place on October 8, 1950, and the Walter Dyck family were the first occupants.

CHURCH RELATED PERIODICALS

In 1941, when John C. Kaufman was elder, he took upon himself the task of printing a year book. Included in this booklet were the church officers, auxiliary officers, baptisms, births, marriages, deaths and a membership list. Later all family members were included, which serves as a family register. After the congregation saw the value of such a booklet, it was decided to print a booklet each year.

In 1950, Walter H. Dyck, our elder, started our

weekly church bulletins. Only 15 issues were printed the first year as the first issue was dated September 17, 1950. Susan Thiessen gave four hours of her time each week in preparing the bulletins. 330 copies were printed for each Sunday at a cost of the paper being about $1.00.

With the youth of the church, Rev. Dyck also printed a church paper, "The Emmaus Echoes." After a time the Adult Christian Endeavor took over the responsibility of editing the paper. Many members have a part in reporting items of interest, and from time to time our missionaries give reports. The Emmaus Echoes is made available to each church family and is sent to those at a distance. Former members and others subscribe to the paper for a nominal fee.

Every year a complete set of bulletins, a year book and the 11 issues of the Emmaus Echoes are put in the Historical Library at Bethel College, North Newton, where they are kept as a historical part of our church.

GENERAL CONFERENCE PERIODICALS

The "Bundesbote," a German periodical published by the General Conference, was a part of our church as early as 1891, when it is recorded that a correspondent was elected. It was the duty of the correspondent to report the deaths and marriages and other important items. He also was responsible for renewing the subscriptions for the members. Later we also received the English version, called "The Mennonite."

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCES

It is not clearly stated, but from the records, one of the district conferences was held in our church in the fall of 1884. In the fall of 1896, the church again was host to the district conference. Since the church building was already crowded for the regular Sunday and special services, it was decided to set up a tent for this occasion. Mention is made that the evening service was held in the tent, which had a seating capacity of 500, and it was well filled.

In 1912, we again hosted the conference. More de-

tails are given as to the preparations, for as early as August, committees were appointed. The trustees were to erect a building for serving the guests at meal time, also to buy 100 chairs. A reception committee of five men were to find lodging for the conference guests. This committee was composed of R. Penner, G. H. Regier, A. N. Claassen, H. H. Wiebe and Abraham Dieck. Serving on the food committee were John Harder, Jr., Gerhard Dyck, J. J. Kopper, H. B. Entz, and J. J. Regier. Although the committee was composed of men, the women had an active part in the preparation of the food. Coffee was brewed in a 20-gallon iron kettle.

This was in the "Horse and Buggy" days, so a committee was selected to care for the horses. A. H. Klaassen, G. A. Harder, Albert Claassen, J. J. Dieck and H. H. Harder served on this committee. A wagon load of oats was furnished to feed the horses. Also a "Taxi Service" was available to bring the conference guests from the depot in Brainerd to the church.

ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

In the booklet of the history of the Emmaus Mennonite Church written in 1951, mention is made of three accidental deaths. Walter Thiessen drowned June 22, 1935, Henry C. Harder was killed by lightning June 5, 1936, and Marie Penner died in the tornado of June 8, 1941. Also killed in the tornado was the six-months-old son of C. B. and Ella Thierstein. It also was mentioned that we had been spared from deaths through car, truck and farm accidents. Since that time, several have died in car accidents: Paul Lee Toevs on June 3, 1968, Clarith Ann Esau on July 28, 1969, Mrs. Kurt Penner on February 8, 1970, Janet Rae Toevs on October 1, 1971, and John H. Dyck on September 14, 1977. On April 28, 1975, Walter A. Claassen died in a farm accident. Another tragedy occurred on June 28, 1958, when three children of the Albert Dycks perished in a fire that destroyed the family home. The children were Gene Leon, 13; Barbara Lou, 9; and Norma Faye, 7. March 25, 1974, Marie Dyck died in a fire that destroyed her home. Death came to Oren Claassen and his wife, Francine in a plane crash on April 7, 1972, in New Guinea, where they were serving the Lord under Wycliffe

Translators.

Our church building is large and so has been used for three double funerals, none of the deceased being members of our church. Pete and Oren Rutschman, brothers; Herman and Gertrude Ingold, brother and sister; Mrs. Ernst Kuhlman and David Kuhlman, grandmother and grandson. All of these were killed in car accidents.

MID-WEEK SERVICES

When the Mid-week services were started, we have no record; but in 1944 the Church Board reported that the services were held regularly. In the fall of 1955, a class for children was started, under the supervision of the Sunday School Committee.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

In 1960, the Church Board appointed a couple who was to be responsible to have a couple or members of a family at the front door to greet the guests that come to worship with us. Each couple serves for one month. They greet the guests and have them register in the guest book. They also hand out the church bulletins. The first year a report was given at the annual business meeting that showed 380 guests had registered, representing 21 states and five countries.

"FAITH AND LIFE" BROADCAST

The Western District Conference sponsored a broadcast over Radio Station KJRG, Newton, for several years, and we took part in these. We sponsored one or two weeks each year and our minister and missionaries gave the messages. We had a part in these broadcasts from about 1953 to 1964.

EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS

We have taken an active part in Evangelistic Campaigns whenever these were held in Whitewater. Probably

the first one was in 1918. This one was held in a building erected for that purpose. Others were held in tents set up for the occasions.

In 1965, we also had a part in the Billy Graham Crusade campaign when it was held in the Memorial Hall on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kansas.

Building third from left was used as a temporary home by the Bernhard Harder, Sr., family, and as first Emmaus worship center. House at left was built soon after. House at right is present home of Bernhard Harder's granddaughter, Mrs. John Epp.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bergman and two daughters in early 1900's. Note nets to protect horses from flies.

The first house of worship used by the Emmaus Mennonite Church was built in 1878 and used until 1908. This picture was taken about 1892. Elder Leonhard Sudermann, his wife and Mrs. G. H. Regier, Sr., pose in the foreground.

The interior of our second church. The clock, pews and pulpit are still used in our present church.

Second Emmaus Church 1908 -- 1928

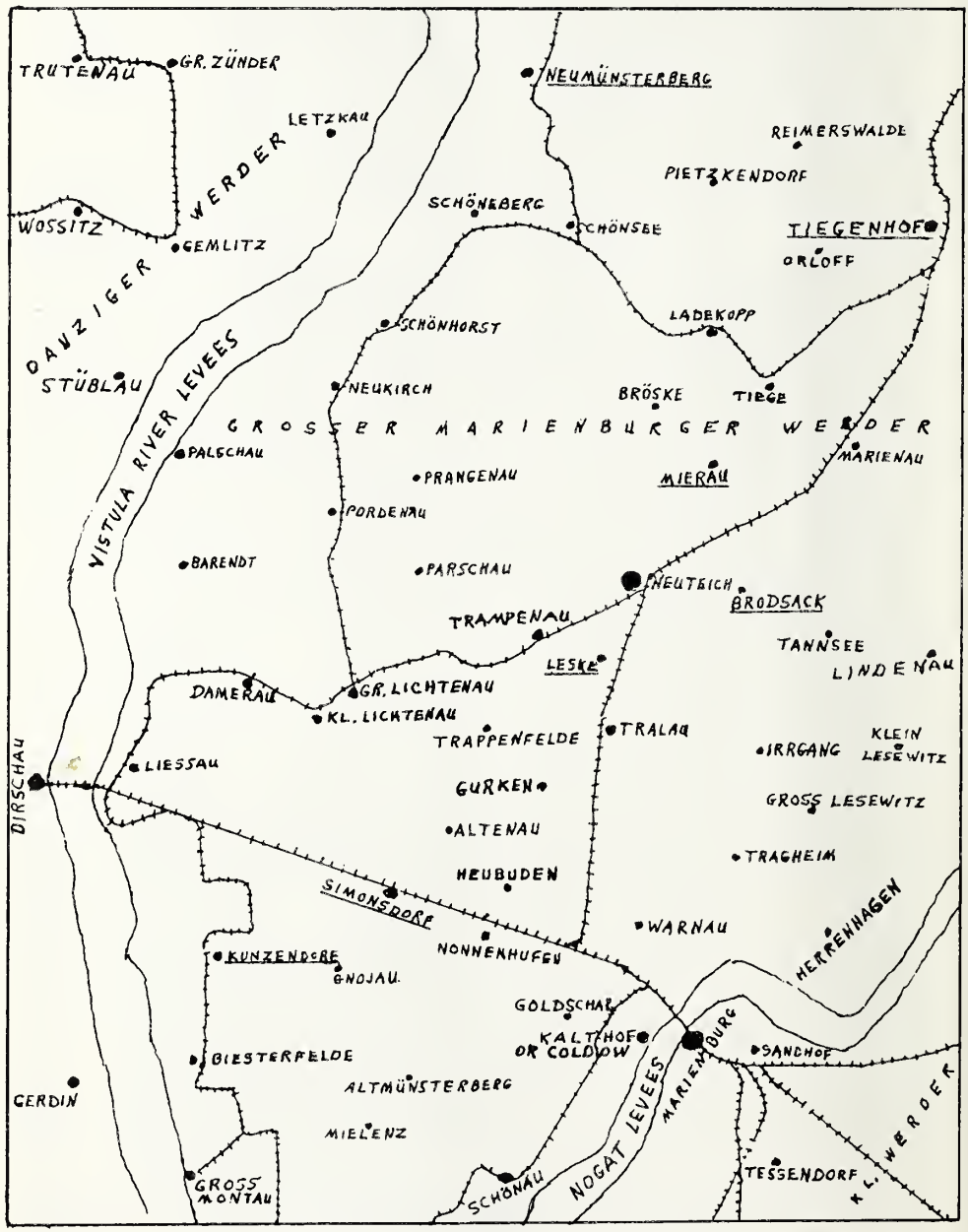
This school of high school level was taught by Rev. B. W. Harder in 1915-16. From left to right, front row: Justine Wiebe, Helen Epp, Elise Regier, Rev. B. W. Harder, Maria Epp, Florence Shumi, Frieda Wiebe. Second row: Elise Wiebe, Marie Entz, Jane Entz, Carl Claassen, Willie Wiebe, John Epp. Third row: Paul Claassen, Edward Regier, Herman Dyck, Cornelius Regier, Henry Wiebe, Bernhard Entz.

School picture taken around 1900. Row 1 and 2 starting at left: Anna Wiebe, Elise Nachtigal, Anna Dieck, Helena Entz, Agnetha Thiessen, Katie Dyck, Margaretha Penner, Rev. B. W. Harder, teacher, Henry C. Harder, Gustav Dyck, Jacob Nachtigal, Henry H. Harder, Henry Brucks, Henry Thiessen, Gerhard Claassen. Back row: Justine Entz, Marie Wiebe, Katie Regier, Elizabeth Penner, Lena Harder, Bernard P. Harder, Jacob Dieck, Alfred Wiebe, Jacob Thiessen.

The Heubuden Mennonite Church in Germany. The majority of the families who started our church came from this church. Note the hitching racks in the foreground as well as the house for the men's coats.

The Ladekopp Mennonite Church in Germany. The tombstones with crosses were erected before 1800. The steel fence in the foreground encloses the graves of three Entz children buried there about 1880. They were the aunt and uncles of Arnold Entz. Note the monument at the right with an angel on it. The names of the men of the church who died in World War I are inscribed in the base.

PART OF VISTULA DELTA
FORMERLY GERMANY,
NOW POLAND.



VISTULA DELTA

The Vistula River (called Weichsel in German) rises in the mountains of Austria and flows northward, reaching the Baltic Sea in an area which historically has been alternately under German and Polish rule. About 30 miles from the sea, the river divides into two channels, of which one, the Weichsel, continues north to the port of Danzig, now known by the Polish name of Gdansk. The other channel, called Nogat, flows northeast past Marienburg to Elbing. Between these channels lies a large low plain called "Das Grosse (large) Marienburger Werder." Southeast, across the Nogat, is another area of low land called "Das Kleine (small) Werder." To the west of the Weichsel is more low land, known as the "Danziger Werder." All this delta land was subject to flooding. The spring thaw would begin in the south in Austria, sending flood waters with ice chunks downriver. Here in colder north Europe these chunks would often freeze together, piling up into huge ice jams, and flooding would result. Even after the water drained away, the land remained wet and swampy.

Our Mennonite ancestors, living in Flanders and Friesland in the Netherlands, were experienced in reclaiming such low-lying areas. When in the 16th Century religious persecution forced them to seek homes elsewhere, they were invited by Polish rulers and landowners to settle here in the Vistula Delta. Large numbers of them responded, and in time, after much toil and hardship, they converted this waste land into very productive fields.

Here they were privileged to reside for many years, in time changing from the Dutch to the German language. The story of their leaving the Delta to emigrate to America is told elsewhere in this book.

Almost all the early members of the Emmaus, Zion and First Mennonite Churches came to America from the area shown on this map, from villages such as Sandhof, Goldschar, Leske, Simonsdorf, Gurken, Brodsack, Tiege and Neumuensterberg.

This farm near Danzig, Germany, was sold by the Bernhard Entz family (grandparents of Arnold Entz) in 1891 so they could emigrate to America.

The building at the left is a house with an attached barn. The building in the right foreground was used to store machinery. The second story was for storing grain. The grain was carried up a stairway in large sacks.

The building in the right background was used to store bundles of grain when it was brought in from the field in the summer. In the winter the grain was threshed in this building. The board fence in the foreground encloses the garden.

When enemy soldiers entered this farmyard during World War II, they asked the farmer if they could see his daughters. He replied, "Over my dead body." He died.

1912 Western District Conference at Emmaus. Foods and Arrangements Committee in foreground. Dining hall and Gerhard Claassen home in background.

MISSIONARIES

Alfred and Agnes Wiebe (General Conference Mennonite) were ordained as our first missionaries in 1911 and served among the American Indians in Montana. Ill health forced them to California for a time of recuperation. In later years they also served among the Indians in Oklahoma. Their retirement years were spent in California. Alfred died on May 7, 1973. Agnes died January 26, 1977.

Marie J. (Regier) Janzen (General Conference Mennonite) - China from 1926-1941. Also served in Paraguay and Taiwan. Retired in 1962.

Dora Regier (Gospel Missionary Union) - Ecuador from 1946 to 1975 when she had to return to the States due to ill health. She died October 26, 1976.

Elsie Regier (Gospel Missionary Union) - Went to Morocco in 1948, was married to Pete Friesen on January 27, 1949, and served until her death in Morocco on March 15, 1955.

Martha Thiessen (Go Ye Mission) - Oklahoma from 1946 to 1966.

Bernard and Ruby Thiessen (Gen. Conf. Mennonite) - Japan from 1952 to ___.

Susan Thiessen (Go Ye Mission) - Oklahoma from 1953 to ___.

Martha Epp (Sudan Interior Mission) - Served in the Sudan from 1956-1961, in Ethiopia from 1961 to 1977, and again in the Sudan from 1978 to ___.

Paul and Barbara Entz (Sudan Interior Mission) - Ethiopia from 1957 to 1976, Nigeria from 1977 to ___.

Linda Harder (Gospel Missionary Union) - Colombia, South America, from 1960 to ___.

Eleanor Entz (Central American Mission) - Honduras, Central America, from 1959 to 1969.

Lewis Earl Entz (Sudan Interior Mission) - Liberia from 1959-1969; (Far East Broadcasting Company) Korea 1973 to ___.

Virginia Claassen (General Conference Mennonite) - Japan 1957 to ___.

Louise Entz, Kentucky, 1964-1967.

Fremont Regier (General Conference Mennonite) - Mexico as agricultural worker from 1961 to 1962; (African Inter-Mennonite Mission) Zaire from 1963 to 1976.

Gilbert Busenitz (Rural Home Mission) - United States from 1962 to 1978; (Source of Light Mission) Georgia, 1978 to ___.

Helen Busenitz (Gospel Missionary Union) - Ecuador, South America, 1966 to ___.

Oren Claassen (Wycliffe Translators) - New Guinea from 1963 until his death on the mission field on April 7, 1972.

John E. Epp (Pleasant Valley Church, South Dakota) - Hong Kong 1964 to ___.

Lillian (Thiessen) Leyenaar (Far Eastern Gospel Crusade) - The Philippines 1967 to ___.

Dorothy (Busenitz) Kasten (Artic Missions Inc.) - Alaska 1967 to ___.

Laverne Busenitz (World Wide European Fellowship) - Germany 1969 to ___.

Arnold Busenitz (Far Eastern Gospel Crusade) - The Philippines from 1970 to 1973.

Emma (Busenitz) Becker (Gospel Missionary Union) - Ecuador 1972 to ___.

John Allen Busenitz (General Conference Mennonite) - Lesotho 1973 to 1976; presently with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

Clifford Harder (Campus Crusade).

Lowell Busenitz (Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship).

Former members who served as our missionaries included the following:

Edward and Velma Wiebe - Go Ye Mission, Oklahoma.

Ernest and Sarah Wiebe - Cuba.

Bernhard and Margaret Wiebe - Child Evangelism Fellowship, Arkansas.

Agnes (Harder) Wuthrich (General Conference Mennonite) - China 1940-1941. After returning from China, she served in Kentucky.

Many others served as short-term missionaries, as relief workers, in the Teachers Abroad Program, in Voluntary Service, in agricultural programs and other agencies.

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